

Canada's folk, roots and world music magazine

penquin eggs



Issue No. 35 Autumn 2007 \$5.99



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Gogol Bordello

Peter Case
Bonnie Dobson
Michael Franti

Ollabelle
Outlaw Social
Kate Rusby

Arlo Guthrie
Ron Kavana
Le Vent du Nord

Stanfest 2007
Ken Whiteley
Tim Williams

win peter case's new cd let us now praise sleepy john — plus more ...


Featuring (top to bottom / left to right)
Gwen Swick, Cindy Church, Caitlin Hanford and Sylvia Tyson

Quartette


down
at
the
fair


"Quartette has always been folk-based, but this CD is its rootsiest and funkier to date."

- Larry LeBlanc, Canadian music journalist |


"Quartette's sixth album is a triumph, delving deeper into roots music and exquisite vocal harmonies."

- Nicholas Jennings, Inside Entertainment

CD launch on Saturday, October 27th, 2007, at Hugh's Room in Toronto

Available September 25th at fine music retailers, nationwide.

www.quartette.com

OUTSIDE

FACTOR

JMI
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INTERNATIONAL

Cover Feature

38 . . . Self-described Gypsy punks Gogol Bordello have attracted massive international attention for their theatrical, rabble-rousing live performances – including a recent knees-up with Madonna during the Live Earth broadcast. A year ago they were playing in a bar in Saskatoon.

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Quotable

"I'm calling my music folk because folk is really just old songs, but that's not really what it is. It's influenced by folk but I also take from traditional blues, country, and Irish music and then I tell my stories." – Peter Case

"I was momentarily transported to Dublin in 1916 and the madness, the futility of the sacrifice of men 'who fought their fight that freedom's light might shine in through the foggy dew.' . . . I did that vocal and felt that I should perhaps re-record the two lines but I decided to leave it as those tears were as real as it gets." – Ron Kavana

"The Gypsy aspect brings you straight to the intersection of art and human rights." Eugene Hütz

"What I've always loved about traditional music is that idea of sitting on the porch singing the songs that are helping you get through today and into tomorrow." – Michael Franti

Sheet Music

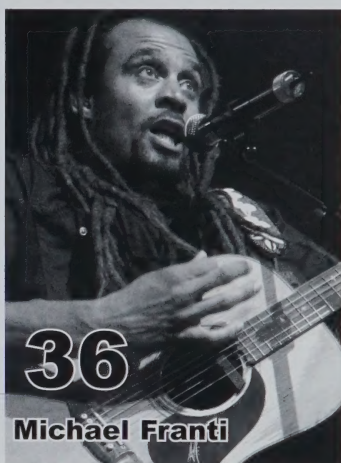
- 76** Song: *Methadone* By Pharis Patenaude
- 77** Fiddle Tune: *Reel Carnaval* – arranged by Pascal Gemme of Genticorum.



42
Arlo Guthrie

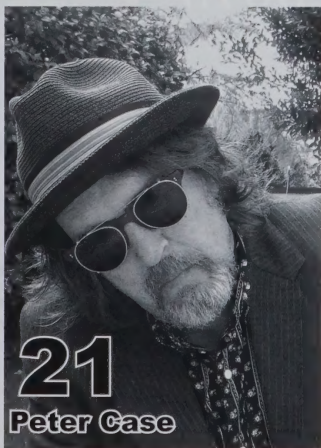


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Kate Rusby

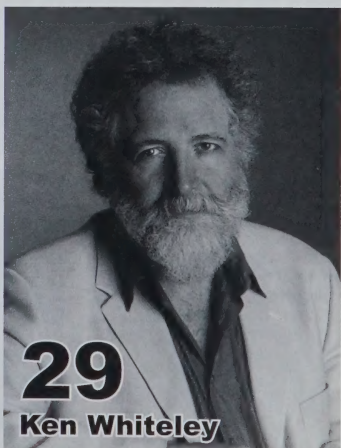


36
Michael Franti

Photo courtesy: Eric Konzewicz & the E.F.M.F.



21
Peter Case

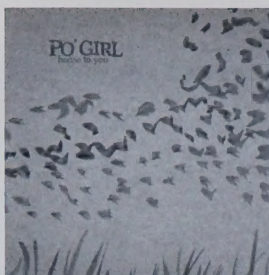


29
Ken Whiteley

"Music that inveigles
its way into your heart
and soul."

- americana-uk.com

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"...understated
instrumentation
and achingly
exquisite lyrics."

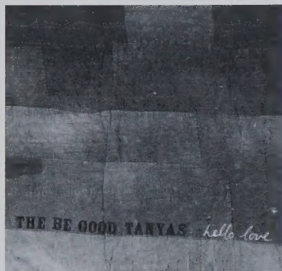
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greatlakeswimmers.com

"...a confident, modern
approach to a very
traditional sound."

- The Guardian

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hello love

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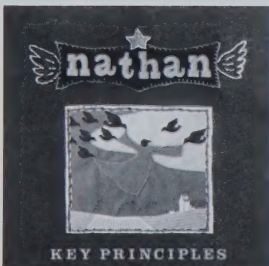


"Imagine the
Carter Family meets
the Ramones and
you begin to get the
picture."

hackensawboys.com

"Infectious alt-country noir,
fractured folk swing and surreal
songwriting" ~ Acoustic Guitar

nathanmusic.ca
myspace.com/nathanband



nathan

KEY PRINCIPLES

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Penguin Eggs welcomes news, features and photos, but cannot accept responsibility for any unsolicited material. Please check with the editor prior to submitting any articles or artwork. We publish four times a year: Summer (June), Autumn (September), Winter (December) and Spring (March).

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This magazine takes its name from Nic Jones's wonderful album *Penguin Eggs* — a collection of mainly traditional British folk songs revitalized with extraordinary flair and ingenuity. Released in Britain in 1980, it has grown into a source of inspiration for such young, gifted performers as Kate Rusby and Eliza Carthy.

Nic, sadly, suffered horrific injuries in a car crash in 1982 and has never fully recovered. He now seldom performs. His care and respect shown for the tradition and prudence to recognize the merits of innovation makes *Penguin Eggs* such an outrageously fine recording. This magazine strives to reiterate that spirit. Nic Jones's *Penguin Eggs* is available through Topic Records.

Penguin Eggs is published and printed in Canada and acknowledges the generous financial support from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program and the Canada Magazine Fund toward our mailing, editorial and production costs.



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for the Arts

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du Canada

Canada



Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts

editorial

I'm set in my ways, I must admit. Change doesn't come easily for me. But after mulling for months, I finally broke down and bought my first iTunes. It was a fast, efficient and absolutely soulless experience. And all for 99 cents. Mere pennies. From my computer I placed it on my iPod. Through the wizardry of electronics it now plays on my stereo both in the house and in the car. The quality is flawless. This song will never scratch, never wear out. Eventually, I suspect, it will be deleted to make room for more. It's the way of the future, apparently.

Still, I'm reminded of the 17th-century English political theorist Thomas Hobbes who believed that individual rights led to war, and a life, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Significant evidence suggests that the destiny of the local mainstreet record store appears fated to join that of the neighbourhood family butcher. And that's a cultural tragedy. I'm attracted to record stores like noctuidia to neon. The more obscure the stock the better. Heaven is walking into Memphis Music Records Tapes on Beale Street for the first time and hearing Charlie Patton coming over the store stereo loud and hair-raisingly good.

It's the habit of a lifetime, this trawling through obscure, dusty record bins in villages, towns and cities whenever and wherever the opportunity arises. Then again, I am from a generation where disposable income meant scrimping pocket money for months on end to buy an LP. In an age of school uniforms, possession of the latest release from Taste, Cream or Hedgehog Pie defined classroom cool. And while we later lamented the passing of the LP, we all adapted splendidly. Technology, after all, has no heart and nostalgia no future.

Digital downloading, like digital radio, may lack vital elements of human interaction but it's so gloriously practical. I love the instantaneous aspect of it all. A song heard on the radio can end up on an iPod in an instant. And it's so egalitarian for a country the size of Canada. Alert, Ellesmere Island, Nunavut is not the end of the world but you can see it from there. Through a computer, someone from this most isolated of all communities can access the same musical sources as an audiophile in the heart of Montreal. How marvellous is that, eh?

The iPod nation, then, is on the march. Until the next fork in the road, count me among its numbers.

— By Roddy Campbell

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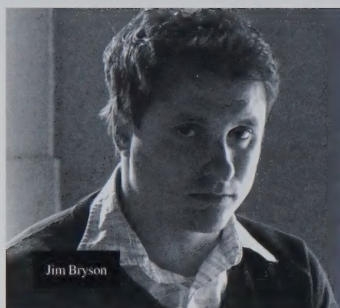
www.warnermusic.ca



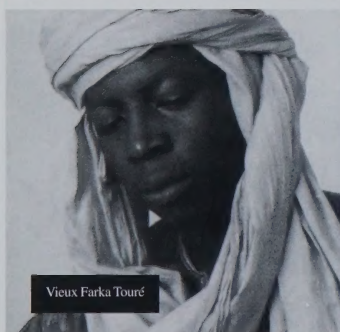
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CANADA



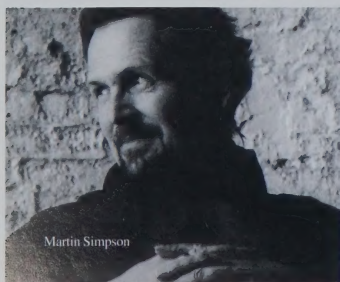
Carolyn Mark



Jim Bryson



Vieux Farka Touré



Martin Simpson

ckua's top 20

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Cowboy Junkies | At The End of Paths Taken | (Universal) |
| 2. Wil | By December | (Universal) |
| 3. Various Artists | Backspin | (Six Degrees) |
| 4. Loudon Wainwright III | Strange Weiridos | (Universal) |
| 5. Feist | The Reminder | (Arts & Crafts) |
| 6. Kiran Ahluwalia | Wanderlust | (Distribution Fusion III) |
| 7. Richard Thompson | Sweet Warrior | (Sony) |
| 8. Bright Eyes | Cassadaga | (Outside) |
| 9. Axel Krygier | Zorzal | (Hitop) |
| 10. Nathan | Key Principles | (Network) |
| 11. Wilco | Sky Blue Sky | (Nonesuch) |
| 12. Laura Veirs | Saltbreakers | (Warner Bros) |
| 13. Tim Williams | Songster, Musicianer... | (Independent) |
| 14. Maria Taylor | Lynn Teeter Flower | (Outside) |
| 15. Duke Robillard | World Full of Blues | (Stony Plain) |
| 16. The Travelling Wilburys | Volume I & II | (Rhino) |
| 17. Carolyn Mark | Nothing Is Free | (Mint) |
| 18. Xavier Rudd | White Moth | (Universal) |
| 19. Rodrigo y Gabriela | Rodrigo y Gabriela | (Sony) |
| 20. Dobet Gnahore | Na Afriki | (Koch) |

The most-played folk, roots and world discs on ckua radio — www.ckua.org — throughout July

soundscapes' top 10

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Andre Ethier | On Blue Fog | (Blue Fog) |
| 2. Wilco | Sky Blue Sky | (Nonesuch) |
| 3. Timber Timbre | Medicinals | (Independent) |
| 4. Ryan Adams | Easy Tiger | (Lost Highway) |
| 5. Mavis Staples | We'll Never Turn Back | (Epitaph) |
| 6. Great Lake Swimmers | Onglira | (Network) |
| 7. Elliot Smith | New Moon | (Kill Rock Stars) |
| 8. Nick Lowe | At My Age | (Yep Roc) |
| 9. Neil Young | Live At Massey Hall | (Warners) |
| 10. Jim Bryson | Where The Bungalows Roam | (Kelp) |

Compiled from June and July sales at Soundscapes, 572 College St., Toronto, ON.

highlife's top 15

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Mavis Staples | We'll Never Turn Back | (Epitaph) |
| 2. Dreamtree Project | Jadur Madur | (Sonic Turtle) |
| 3. 10 Foot Ganga Plant | Bass Chalice | (BOIR) |
| 4. Gaudi & Nusrat Fateh Ali Kahn | Dub Qawwali | (Six Degrees) |
| 5. Vieux Farka Touré | Vieux Farka Touré | (World Village) |
| 6. Ruthie Foster | The Phenomenal Ruthie Foster | (Blue Corn) |
| 7. Andy Palacio | Watina | (Cumbancha) |
| 8. Wilco | Sky Blue Sky | (Nonesuch) |
| 9. Balkan Beat Box | Nu Med | (JDUDB) |
| 10. Bole 2 Harlem | Bole 2 Harlem | (Sounds of the Mushroom) |
| 11. Angélique Kidjo | Djin Djin | (Razor & Tie) |
| 12. Jenn Grant | Orchestra For The Moon | (Paris 1919) |
| 13. Tinariwen | Aman Iman | (World Village) |
| 14. The Soul Jazz Orchestra | Freedom No Go Die | (Do Right Music) |
| 15. Ben Harper | Lifeline | (Virgin) |

Compiled from June and July sales at Highlife Records, 1317 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC.

martin simpson's 10 favourite albums

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Peter Bellamy | The Transports | (Green Hand Records) |
| Bob Dylan | The Times They Are A-Changin' | (Columbia) |
| Dick Gaughan | Handful of Earth | (Topic) |
| Blind Willie Johnson | The Complete... | (Sony) |
| Little Feat | Dixie Chicken | (Warner Bros) |
| Joni Mitchell | Hejira | (WEA) |
| Various Artists | High Atmosphere | (Rouner) |
| Various Artists | Before The Blues | (Yazoo) |
| Doc Watson | Home Again | (Vanguard) |
| The Watersons | For Pence and Spicy Ale | (Topic) |

Martin Simpson's latest album, *Prodigal Son*, is reviewed on page 49

ground floor top 10

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Feist | The Reminder | (Arts & Crafts) |
| 2. The Travelling Wilburys | Volume I & II | (Rhino) |
| 3. Neil Young | Live At Massey Hall | (Warners) |
| 4. Mavis Staples | We'll Never Turn Back | (Epitaph) |
| 5. Tannis Slimmon | Lucky Blue | (DROG) |
| 6. Oliver Schroer | Camino | (Big Dog) |
| 7. Ry Cooder | My Name Is Buddy | (Nonesuch) |
| 8. Ray Lamontagne | 'Til The Sun Turns Black | (RCA) |
| 9. Various Artists | African Guitar Summit II | (CBC) |
| 10. Tinariwen | Aman Iman | (World Village) |

Compiled from June and July sales at Ground Floor Music 13 Quebec St., Guelph, ON

iTunes top 5

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Pascale Picard | Me Myself Us | (Zone 3) |
| 2. Ani DiFranco | Canon | (Righteous Babe) |
| 3. Meiko | Meiko | (Independent) |
| 4. Loreena McKennitt | An Ancient Muse | (Verve) |
| 5. Amos Lee | Amos Lee | (Blue Note) |

Compiled from June and July Canadian album sales at iTunes

fred's top 10

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Various Artists | Newfoundland Drinking Songs II | (Independent) |
| 2. Amelia Curran | War Brides | (Sandbar) |
| 3. Hey Rosetta | Plan Your Escape | (Independent) |
| 4. Feist | The Reminder | (Arts & Crafts) |
| 5. Shanneyganock | Fling Out The Flag | (Independent) |
| 6. Irish Descendants | Southern Shore | (Independent) |
| 7. Shaye | Lake of Fire | (EMI) |
| 8. Duane Andrews | Crocus | (Independent) |
| 9. Jim Payne & Fergus O'Byrne | How Good Is Me Life | (Independent) |
| 10. Amy Winehouse | Back To Back | (Universal) |

Compiled from June and July sales at Fred's Records, 198 Duckworth St., St John's, NF

sillons' top 15

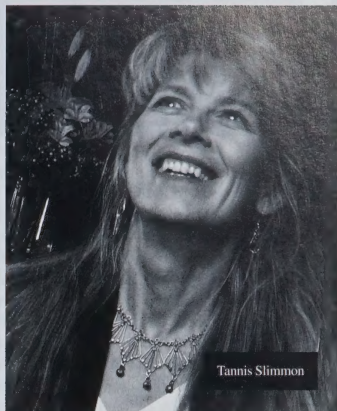
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Rufus Wainwright | Release The Stars | (Geffen) |
| 2. Tricot Machine | Tricot Machine | (Outside Music) |
| 3. Pascale Picard | Me Myself Us | (Zone 3) |
| 4. Kevin Parent | Fangless Wolf Facing Winter | (Audiogram) |
| 5. Rachid Taha | Diwan | (Polygram) |
| 6. Rufus Wainwright | Poses | (Geffen) |
| 7. Xavier Rudd | White Moth | (Universal) |
| 8. Ojos de Brujo | Techari | (Diquella) |
| 9. Gianmaria Testa | Da Questa Parte Del Marte | (Chant du Monde) |
| 10. Andrew Bird | Armchair Apocrypha | (Fat Possum) |
| 11. Tinariwen | Aman Iman | (World Village) |
| 12. Wilco | Sky Blue Sky | (Nonesuch) |
| 13. Angélique Kidjo | Djin Djin | (Razor & Tie) |
| 14. Loreena McKennitt | An Ancient Muse | (Verve) |
| 15. Angélique Ionatos | Eros Y Muerte | (Naïve) |

Compiled from June and July sales at Sillons, 1149 Avenue Cartier, Quebec, QC

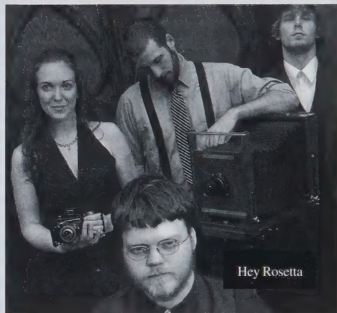
megatunes' top 10

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. The Travelling Wilburys | Volume I & II | (Rhino) |
| 2. Mavis Staples | We'll Never Turn Back | (Epitaph) |
| 3. Wilco | Sky Blue Sky | (Nonesuch) |
| 4. Feist | The Reminder | (Arts & Crafts) |
| 5. Graham Parker | Don't Tell Columbus | (Bloodshot) |
| 6. Joan Armatrading | Into The Blues | (429) |
| 7. David Bromberg | Try Me One More Time | (Applesseed) |
| 8. Ndidi Onukwulu | No, I Never | (Jaricho Beach) |
| 9. St Vincent | Marry Me | (Beggars) |
| 10. Rufus Wainwright | Release The Stars | (Geffen) |

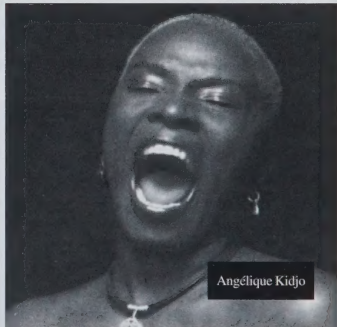
Compiled from June and July sales at Megatunes, 10355 Whyte Ave. Edmonton, AB



Tannis Slimmon



Hey Rosetta



Angélique Kidjo



Ndidi Onukwulu

News•Gossip•Rumour•Tattle

Festival Distribution, the largest distributor of folk and roots records in Canada, is set to make its expansive catalogue available as digital downloads. The Vancouver-based company, which started as an offshoot of the Vancouver Folk Music Festival in 1980, currently distributes the likes of **Ani DiFranco**, **Tom Russell** and **Stan Rogers**. It has signed with the Independent Online Distribution Alliance to process its sales, says Festival Distribution owner **Jack Schuler**. "Basically, we are signing people for international digital distribution. We are going to act as a conduit for independent Canadian folk and roots acts. In the new year we plan to be selling on our own website."

His move to downloading discs digitally, Schuler says, is a result of reduced market sales for CDs caused by online buying and retailers reducing their room for independent artists' discs. "We are off 30 per cent from last year. There is a revolution going on. The market has been turned on its head. We either go the way of the carriage maker or go [digital]."

Yet, sales of CDs at live gigs are largely on the increase. Festival Distribution sales at Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Festival in August increased by 25 per cent, says Schuler.

Festival Distribution also plans to move into electronic marketing for independent

Canadian folk musicians and singers — much the same way the Boston-based Sonicbids does now with its online digital press kits. "We find most artists are not interested in marketing and administration," says Schuler. "I think we've found a niche to market artists directly to the consumer."

iTunes reported in July selling its three billionth song since its formation four years ago. This milestone came just six months after iTunes, Apple Inc.'s online music download service, surpassed the two billion mark. The service, launched in April 2003, took until February 2006 to sell its first billion songs.

In the first three months of 2007, iTunes was ranked the third-biggest overall music retailer in the U.S., behind Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Best Buy Co. This ranking is based on units sold, not revenue from sales, and counted every 12 tracks purchased online as equivalent to an album in compact disc format.

Apple's line of iPod portable music players has been key to iTunes' popularity. One hundred million iPods have been sold in the past five and a half years.

Kutapira, Vancouver's youth marimba ensemble, went to Aberdeen, Scotland, to rep-

resent Canada at a world youth music festival and wound up performing for the **Queen** and the **Royal Family** at nearby Balmoral Castle. After the performance, the Queen met and talked with each of Kutapira's members individually. She is quoted on their website as saying, "The music is very clever ... it makes you want to move." She then called for the royal piper to jam with the band in a little Afro-Celtic experimentation. A **Peter Gabriel** fan perhaps?

Fort McLeod, AB, singer-songwriter **John Wort Hannam** won a coveted New Folk Award at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas in May. Hannam was one of six category winners. Past recipients include **Steve Earle**, **Nanci Griffith** and **Lyle Lovett**.

Hannam will spend Oct. 29 and 30 in Nashville, TN, writing with **Guy Clark**. Hannam heard Clark interviewed in February at the North American Folk Alliance convention in Memphis, TN, about how he overcame writer's block by collaborating with other songwriters. Several months later, Hannam found himself in Winnipeg talking to the city's former folk festival artistic director, **Rosalie Goldstein**, and mentioned how he would love to write with Clark. Goldstein called him on Hannam's behalf. "He said send a CD and to call him. I was too scared



Jack Schuler



The Queen meets Kutapira

to call," says Hannam. "So I just sent the CD. He liked the record and asked if I was coming through Nashville? I said, 'Pick a time and I'll go down.' Hopefully, we'll get something out of it. I am just thrilled to meet the man." Hannam's recent recording, *Two-Bit Suit* is released by Black Hen Records.

Inuit throat singer **Tanya Tagaq** will showcase at the prestigious World of Music Exhibition (WOMEX) in Seville, Spain, Oct. 24-28. She is the only Canadian performer booked to appear. WOMEX is the world's biggest professional music conference, trade fair and showcase for world, roots and folk music. More than 50 artists from around the globe will perform in Seville throughout the four days. Tagaq, accompanied by cellist **Chris Derksen**, will then head to the U.K. to tour with Scotland's **Shooglenifty**. She guests on their current album *Troots* on the track *Excess Baggage*. Later this year, she will record a new album in Calgary with noted Spanish producer **Juan Hernandez**. It will feature collaborations with the likes of **Buck 65** and **Mike Paton** of **Faith No More**.

Award-winning bluegrass fiddler and vocalist **Alison Krauss** and former Led Zeppelin song and dance man **Robert Plant** release a collaborative album, *Raising Sand*, Oct. 23, on Rounder Records. It was produced by **T Bone Burnett** (*O' Brother Where Art Thou?*) and recorded with such musicians as **Norman Blake** and **Mike Seeger**. Burnett suggested most of the material, which includes tracks written by **Townes Van Zandt** and **Doc Watson**.

The idea for *Raising Sand* emerged almost seven years ago, when Plant called Krauss to say hello and how much he'd love to work with her, she told Country Music Television. Plant made good on his word and called her about participating in a **Leadbelly** tribute at the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland in 2004, where they first sang together.

A highly successful benefit concert for **Willie P. Bennett**, featuring **Blackie and The Rodeo Kings**, **Fred Eaglesmith**, **Washboard Hank**, **Liam Titcomb** and **The Shiners**, raised almost \$18,000 on July 27 in Peterborough, ON. The Juno Award-winning Bennett suffered a heart attack while playing with Fred Eaglesmith in Midland, ON, on Victoria Day (May 21), when he realized he wasn't feeling well. After the show he checked himself in to hospital. He is expected to make a full recovery.

Utah Phillips cancelled his appearance at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival due to serious heart problems. His ability to perform in the future is now in jeopardy. While he remains upbeat, Phillips will have to undergo major surgery in the coming months.

Penny Lang received the **Helen Verger Award** at the Ottawa Folk Festival for her significant contribution to Canadian folk and roots music. The award is named after the founder of the iconic Ottawa coffee house, **Rasputin's**. Past recipients include **Sylvia Tyson**, **Bruce Cockburn**, **Ferron**, **Kate and Anna McGarrigle** and **Buffy Sainte-Marie**. Lang took Best Solo Artist and Best Album - Contemporary honours at the Canadian Folk Music Awards in Decem-

ber for her album *Stone+Sand+Sea+Sky*.

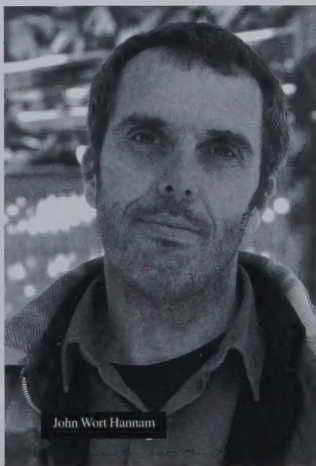
Larry LeBlanc, the Canadian bureau chief of *Billboard*, the U.S.-based music trade magazine, has stepped down from the post he has held since 1991. Toronto-based journalist **Robert Thompson**, who writes the golf blog *Going for the Green*, will take LeBlanc's place.

"Obviously, one doesn't relish being replaced but those who know me know I've talked of leaving *Billboard* for years," says the likeable, veteran music journalist. "I'm proud of my coverage of Canada for the publication. I certainly feel I've helped bring Canadian music to global markets."

LeBlanc has written extensively about Canadian rock as well as spotlighting Quebec and Atlantic Canada music scenes, blues, folk, and independent music. Celebrated BBC-2 DJ **Whisperin' Bob Harris** described him as, "The glue that holds the Canadian music industry together."

"Seventeen years is a very good run," says LeBlanc. "But I've have had a successful freelance career dating back to 1965. If anything, I am probably busier today than I have ever been as a writer."

CKUA, Alberta's province-wide, listener-supported radio network, turns 80 on Nov. 21. Originally broadcast from the University of Alberta, the network has developed into one of the most important stations in Canada, broadcasting independent music. Its speciality shows include folk, roots, world, jazz, bluegrass and blues. Indeed, its *Natch'l Blues*, hosted by **Holger Petersen**, has been on the air since 1969. It's Canada's oldest-running



John Wort Hannam



Alison Krauss and Robert Plant



EDMONTON
FOLK MUSIC
FESTIVAL



Thanks to All

**Volunteers, Patrons, Supporters and Artists of
the 2007 Edmonton Folk Music Festival
Next Festival August 7-10, 2008**



blues program. To celebrate this historical occasion, CKUA, in partnership with the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, will present a folk and roots concert series this fall in rural communities throughout the province. **Andy Donnelly** of *The Celtic Show* and producer of the series will host the six concerts. Dates include Beaverlodge, Sept. 8, **Cori Brewster** with *Down on the Wood*; Fort McLeod, Sept. 22, **Kris Demeanor** with **Steve Fisher**; Cochrane, Oct. 6, **Andrea House**, with **Ralf Buschmyer**; Lloydminster, Oct. 12, **Stephens Green** with **Karla Anderson**; Rosebud, Nov. 18, **Kat Danser** with **The Polyjesters**; Edson, Nov. 24, **The Fates** with **Robin Hunter**. For ticket and venue information, visit www.ckua.com.

The Edmonton Oilers hockey club have recruited **Terry Wickham**, artistic director of the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, as their poster boy. Wickham, along with various other local celebrities, appears on several billboards through the city promoting Edmonton's cultural community and the hockey team. Besides his duties at the festival, Wickham will oversee *The Winspear Presents Concert Series* this fall and winter at Edmonton's prestigious Winspear Centre.

The 5th annual Homefest takes place on Sunday, Nov. 4, at the Transalta Arts Barns in Edmonton, AB. Homefest highlights the shortage of affordable housing, not only in Alberta but across the country. This one-day festival will feature the likes of **David Francey**, **Asani**, **Ann Vriend** and **Al Brant**. For more information, visit www.homefest.ca.

Two new Ontario venues will host folk

and roots music. The Knox Acoustic Cafe in Owen Sound launched its inaugural season in April with **J.P. Cormier**. The not-for-profit, volunteer-run organization will promote both established and rising artists and run once a month for most of the year. Future shows include Sept. 22, **Chuck Baker**; Oct. 27, **The Undesireables**; and Nov. 17, **Serievit**. For more information, e-mail: acousticcafe@knoxowensound.ca.

Jim Marino, host of *The Freewheeling Folk Show* at CFMU 93.3 in Hamilton, ON, has co-founded the Freewheelin' Concert Series that will run throughout the fall and

winter at the 300-seat Downtown Arts Centre, 28 Rebecca Street, Hamilton, ON. Dates confirmed include Sept. 22, **Stephen Fearing** with **Eve Goldberg**; Oct. 27, **Tanglefoot** with **The Choir Girlz**; Dec. 7, **David Francey** with **Heather Dale**; Jan. 26, **Jory Nash**, **Suzie Vinnick** and **Aengus Finnan**, with **Kirsten Jones** and **Kevin Zarnett**; and April 5, **Lynn Miles** with **Michael Cavan**. For more information, go to www.freewheelinconcerts.ca

Joni Mitchell will release her new album, *Shine*, through Starbucks' Hear Music label, home to **Paul McCartney's** *Most Full*. In 2002, Mitchell called the record business a "cesspool" and vowed never to record again for a major label. "I have to figure out a way to sell over 'Net or do something else," she told *Rolling Stone* at the time. *Shine* is Mitchell's first release of new material since *Taming The Tiger* in 1998, and focuses on environmental issues, war and famine. It's due out this fall.

The 3rd Annual Canadian Folk Music Awards runs Dec. 1 at the Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, QC. Scheduled performers include **Ron Hynes**, **Vishten**, **Ian Tamblyn**, **Florent Volent**, **Galitcha**, **Sylvia Tyson**, **The Duhks** and **T. Nile**. CBC Radio's **Shelagh Rogers** and former *Le Vent du Nord* accordion player **Benoit Bourque** will host. Admission will include an after-event reception. Go to www.canadianfolkmusicawards.ca




I am a DJ—I am what I play

Lark Clark has presented world music on the CKUA Radio Network, Canada's oldest public broadcaster since 1997. She currently hosts *World Spinning*. As the title suggests, it features a wonderful mix of global sounds rarely heard on radio. With a penchant for deep roots, Clark offers everything from timeless, traditional music to field recordings, club beats, interviews, freakish blends, and anything that makes her dance. Among her most treasured guests have been *Buena Vista Social Club* alumni, **Juan de Marcos Gonzalez**, and Indian classical tabla player, **Zakir Hussein**. Clark's spinoff shows include *Dispatches from South Africa*, *Sonidos Latinos* (a 12-part Latin



Lark Clark

music series), and *Showers of Blessings* (a gospel music series)—all on CKUA. *World Spinning* can be heard throughout North America, Sundays, 4-6 pm MST, on www.ckua.com, or on your radio dial anywhere in Alberta.



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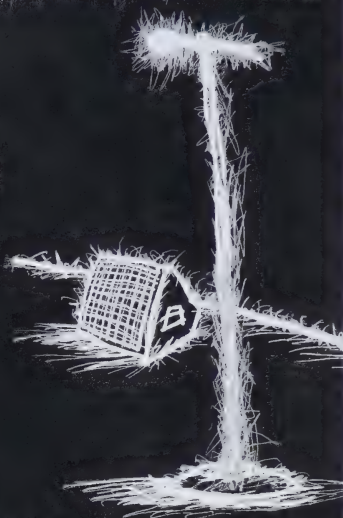
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Richard Bell 1946 - 2007

Celebrated Canadian keyboard player Richard Bell, whose recording credits includes albums by Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan and Bonnie Raitt, died in Toronto June 15 from cancer, writes Roddy Campbell.

Born March 5, 1946, the son of University of Toronto music professor, Dr. Leslie Bell, Richard attended Canada's Royal Conservatory of Music. A career in classical music held no interest, however, and in the early '60s he immersed himself in Toronto's flourishing pop scene first with The Last Words before joining rockabilly icon Ronnie Hawkins. Bell left Hawkins to co-found blues-based rockers Crowbar. While they enjoyed chart success with the hit *Oh What A Feeling*, Bell left to join Janis Joplin's Full Tilt Boogie Band. He appears on her last and finest record, *Pearl*.

Following Joplin's death, Bell landed tours and recording sessions with Bonnie Raitt, John Sebastian, Judy Collins, Bob Dylan, Bobby Charles, Rick Danko, Joe Walsh and Paul Butterfield. Bell eventually played on over 400 albums.

In 1991, he joined The Band as a keyboardist, replacing Stan Szelest (himself a replacement for original pianist Richard Manuel) and performed on their final three albums (*Jericho*, *High on the Hog* and



Jubilant), The Band folded after the death of Rick Danko in 1999 and Bell went on to play with Blackie & The Rodeo Kings, Bruce Cockburn, Kathleen Edwards, the Cowboy Junkies, Burrito Deluxe and Pork-belly Futures.

Tommy Makem 1932-2007

The much-recorded singer and musician, broadcaster and author Tommy Makem died in Dover, New Hampshire on 1 August 2007, writes Ken Hunt. With his death a slab of Irish and Irish-American culture has passed. Born in Keady, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland on 4 November 1932, he arrived with conspicuous musical genes, thanks to his fiddle-playing father Peter and his ballad-singing mother Sarah. Sarah Makem was a repository of traditional ballads and her recordings released on Tradition and Topic greatly informed the British folk revival.

In 1947 brothers, Paddy and Tom Clancy emigrated to Canada from Ireland and the following year headed south, eventually settling in New York where they found work as actors off Broadway. At the year's turning of 1955/1956 their brother Liam joined them. Whilst accompanying Diane Hamilton of the Guggenheim family on a song-collecting trip to Ireland, Liam Clancy had met Sarah Makem – and through her, Tommy Makem. The two lads hit it off and Liam soon realised that Tommy could deliver a song and had an acting flair.

Makem first emigrated to Dover, NH, but moved to New York to join the Clancys in Greenwich Village where there was a new movement afoot: folk song. To earn money they put on late-night concerts, billing themselves as the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. An institution was born.

The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem specialised in belting out chorus songs. Their repertoire reflected and influenced the period. Repertoire mainstays like *Jug of Punch*, *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *The Irish Rover* became the common currency. Bob Dylan recalls in *Chronicles* (2004) getting friendly with Liam and going down to an Irish bar called the White Horse Tavern on Hudson Street. The songs he heard there – “rebellion songs”, drinking songs and the rest – planted seeds (“I had grasped the idea of what kind of songs I wanted to write, I just didn't know how to do it yet”).

The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem went from strength to strength, landing a Columbia recording contract, playing the Ed Sullivan Show, headlining at Carnegie Hall and performing for President John F. Kennedy at the White House. They were also creating a blueprint for the next generation of Irish musicians. Christy Moore told

me how he came under their sway.

In 1969 Makem went solo, picking up on his mother's ballad legacy with *As I Roved Out* and *The Month of January* (a fixture in June Tabor's later repertoire) and adding songs of his own in a folk idiom like *Gentle Annie*, *Four Green Fields* (concerning England's impact on Irish history) and *The Winds Are Singing Freedom*. Makem and Liam Clancy reunited in the 1970s – on television and in concert – leading to a series of duo albums, some massive sellers. The first included Eric Bogle's defining Great War song *And The Band Played 'Waltzing Matilda*. In 1988 they went their separate ways.

In later life Makem worked in radio and television, splitting time between his homeland and the USA. He also authored Tommy Makem's *Secret Ireland* (1997) – which drew together Irish mythology, Irish ways and Irish laws –, devised the similarly themed, theatrical performance *Invasions and Legacies* (1999) and founded South Armagh's Tommy Makem International Festival of Song in 2000. Thomas James Makem was one of the musical greats of our age.

Peerie' Willie Johnson 1920-2007

'Peerie' Willie Johnson and his guitar transformed traditional Shetland fiddle music with subtle jazz inflections and chords that differed from, yet complimented those heard in traditional Shetland reels, wedding marches and strathspeys, writes Ken Hunt. Johnson died May 22 of emphysema.

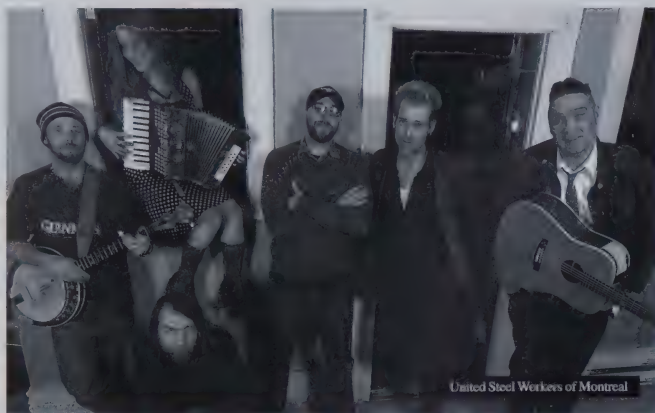
His guitar playing was greatly informed by shortwave radio reception from the USA. He heard Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti, Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli, Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Hearing those strange jazz chords put Johnson on the road to surveying the guitar fretboard for every chord he could locate.

Johnson met the musician with whom his name will forever be associated – Tom Anderson (1910-1991) in a Lerwick music store in 1936. Johnson on guitar and Anderson on fiddle influenced Shetland, Orkney and Scots music. You can detect it in the playing of Aly Bain, the Easy Club, Hom Bru and the Wrigley Sisters.

Johnson was inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame in 2005. That year the Shetlands inaugurated the Peerie Willie Johnson Guitar Festival too. He may be heard on the Boys of the Lough's *Good Friends – Good Music* (1977), or on numerous Aly Bain projects.



Shortcuts



United Steel Workers of Montreal

By Mary Beth Carty

A bullfrog-throated boulder-man, a cracked-voiced mermaid, a skinny double bassist, a baseball-capped songwriter, a former skater-banjoist, and a deadhead electric guitarist; no, USWM are not comic-book characters, nor are they unionized – they are a tight, six-piece, working-class, country-punk string band. Whether crooning a slow-dance lullaby or roaring a devilish hootenany, the Workers are as entertaining to watch as they are to listen to.

Gern F, who fits the first description, recorded and produced the Workers' new album, *Kerosene and Coal*, which they will take across Canada this fall. The band grew out of a jam session Gern started in the local metro station on Tuesday nights. "After about seven months of getting kicked out of the metro for being too loud, we started doing regular rehearsals. We were focusing on originals. Five years and 20-odd musicians later, you find the band we have today. It's been a year and a half since we've lost or gained anybody."

At the beginning, Gern called the band The Congregates. "The others thought it was too Catholic. We needed a name that was blue-collar tinged." Someone suggested their current moniker and it stuck – the association with Montreal, steel-stringed instruments, and the working class were fitting. The name has served them well.

"People from the electricians' union and CAW will come to our shows and end up liking us." The band itself is a little like a union – a collective, perhaps. "The idea from the beginning was that we would switch up singers and songwriters. We arm wrestle over the arrangements, but the guy who wrote the song always has the last say."

Their big accomplishment this summer

was the shooting of a music video for the duet song *Émile Bertrand*, inspired by a 100-year-old Casse-Crouete found in the stagnant Griffintown neighbourhood, where a canal once operated. "I walked out with my hot-dog and I couldn't see the new condos from where I was standing. And I just connected with the history of the place." Unfortunately, they were not able to shoot the movie at the spot that inspired the song. "When we arrived, there was a sign saying the old lady who ran the place had passed away." Her husband moved to another greasy spoon not too far away, where the video was shot, and will be available for viewing sometime this fall.

Be sure to watch for Montreal's "going concern" at your local saloon this autumn!

Ruth Minnikin

By Mary Beth Carty

For Halifax songwriter Ruth Minnikin, inspiration does not always come during hours of consciousness. "*Bad Dreams I & II* came out of a dream where I was sitting there teaching people a song. I woke up and played the chords and I thought, 'This is wacky'."

The unlikely theme song starts and finishes *Folk Art*, Ruth's third solo album. Contained in a hand-sewn, ink-stamped canvas



case, this release has no pretension – it is as independent as indie comes.

But Minnikin has had her share of major record labels. Her rock band, The Booming Airplanes, was signed to EMI during the Halifax pop explosion of the '90s, and her side project, the Heavy Blinkers, is big in Japan. She made two albums and toured the U.K. and U.S. with alt-country quintet the Guthries, who have shared the stage with David Byrne and Calexico. She's happy to go the independent route now, but admits that labels do have benefits. "Not everyone is a motivated e-mailing junkie like me," says Ruth, who is her own booker, producer, publicist and manager. She has crossed Canada from coast to coast countless times, usually with friends like Kate Maki and Nathan Lawr. "It's a big, long trip. Once you start there's no turning back. You can't say, 'Oh, maybe I won't play Saskatoon tonight'."

Folk Art is an appropriate title for the French-horn, bass-clarinet and banjo-laden album, which also features her brother, Gabriel Minnikin, on vocals and mandolin. "I look at art and music as kind of being the same thing," says Ruth, a recent graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Ruth's remarkable voice drifts through these quirky, cutely beautiful numbers. *Southern Misfortune* deals with post-hurricane New Orleans. *Stairs* with the death of her grandmother, and *Admirable Admiral* with difficult audiences. "It's about playing in loud bars and seeing other quiet musicians doing their passion – like putting themselves out there, playing their little ditties that came from their hearts to a room that really isn't interested. I feel like I don't really have a choice in the matter – my music and art is just something I've got to do."

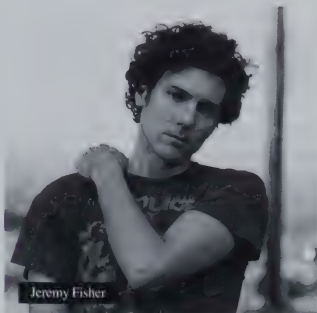
Jeremy Fisher

By David McPherson

Armed with a Vintage 1947 Gibson LG-2 guitar, Vancouver's Jeremy Fisher makes song sculptures that take equal parts from Woody Guthrie's songbook as from Mississippi John Hurt's.

Fusing blues and folk, and mixing in some pop to create hook-filled songs, the troubadour returns to his DIY roots for his latest, *Goodbye Blue Monday*. Inspired by this back-to-basics approach, Fisher learned how to animate, and made a video for *Cigarette* that became a YouTube phenomenon.

"I always wanted to learn to animate and I had a little time on my hands, so I did it," he explains. "I uploaded it directly to YouTube and then a month later YouTube featured it on their front page and that's when the views went from 2,000 over the span of a month to 250,000 in 24 hours,



Jeremy Fisher

and now it's up over two million."

The folkie doesn't smoke, so he struggled to come up with a way to make *Cigarette* sound authentic. Enter co-writer Jay Joyce, a 16-year veteran smoker and a Nashville songsmith, who helped Fisher finish the song.

"Jay was like, 'I can tell you all about that ... I'm jonesing for a cigarette right now'. Within 15 minutes, he kept throwing out ideas and I wrote them down and compiled them into lyrics and he came up with the chord progression and a little melody for the verses. It was one of those things it was done almost as soon as we had the idea."

No smoke, but plenty of folk is what you'll get from *Goodbye Blue Monday*, and a generous sprinkling of pop.

"I'm an unabashed pop music fan. I love a great pop song like *I Want You Back* by the Jackson Five, so those influences find their way into my songs. What I do is pop music played on folk instruments. I'm pretty adamant about using old stuff and trying to get interesting sounds out of a mandolin, a banjo and an acoustic guitar rather than an electric guitar or synthesizer."

Whiskey Hollow Bound

By Tom Murray

If you ask Steve Charles about the puzzling explosion of bluegrass and old time music in Vancouver he'll admit to being at a loss for words.

"I can't really say how it started," bemusedly confesses Charles, who plays guitar and banjo, as well as sings with the trio Redgrass. "There were a few good bands, and from there it just exploded in the last few years. The Anza club has been somewhat of a force for uniting players with their open session on Monday night - that's where I started meeting people three or four years ago."

Originally exclusively a jazz musician, Charles notes that a lot of what's attracted like minded players to old time music is the emphasis on feeling, something that's missing in the more polished sounds of contemporary music.

"They've gone deep into the traditional sounds, away from intellectualised music. It's not as though it's harmonically advanced - my colleagues are interested in I guess what you'd call the 'crookedness' of the music."

Charles was interested in more than just playing old time music for kicks on weekends - he wanted to capture the scene as it was coming together. Thus was born *Whiskey Hollow Bound*, a compilation of bands playing bluegrass and old time music in the B.C. capital.

"It's incredible - I just basically went for it. The bands supplied their own tracks, but we had a fundraiser that was crazy - we raised \$5,000, which went immediately towards production."



The Breakmen - Whiskey Hollow Bound

Whiskey Hollow Bound shows an impressively diverse group of enthusiasts - bands like The Breakmen, Dyad, Redgrass, Viper Central and Plough - experimenting with but still very much capturing the essence of the old time form.

Charles is proud of the way the compilation balances both the desire to push on with respect for the traditions of old time music.

"Some of the bands use different songwriting, others try different instruments, and it's modern even while it's old."

Stairwell Sisters

By Tom Murray

Split between Oakland and San Francisco, the Stairwell Sisters have grabbed the at-

tention of listeners and critics alike with their debut album, *Feet All Over the Floor*. It's an appealingly raucous, energetic recording with lots of trad numbers ranging easily between folk, gospel and bluegrass - *My Dying Bed*, *Greasy Coat*, *Cindy in the Meadows* - as well as a handful of originals that keep the feeling of old time music without sounding like museum pieces.

That's an important distinction to make for Ladin and her bandmates - bassist Martha Hawthorne, fiddle player Stephanie Prausnitz, multi instrumentalists Lisa Berman and Sue Sandlin - who might invoke the spirit of Dock Boggs, Arthur Smith and Hazel Dickens but make it clear it's not from the perspective of crotchety archivists.

"No, that's not us at all - we refer to them as moldy figs. We just think the music has to have an edge - we don't feel compacent about it."

Complacent she's not - she's been involved in old time music all of her life.

"I actually started playing banjo when I was eight. And the time is right for this music to come back - it seems to go in thirty-year cycles, and it's been roughly thirty since the folk revival of the '60s."

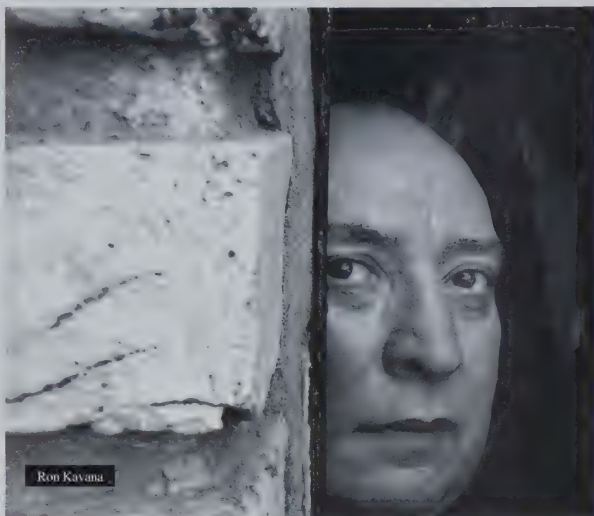
If the original folk revival had strong roots in leftist circles and the union movement, bluegrass music in California picks up a fairly conservative, patriotic crowd - the unabashedly liberal Stairwell Sisters make clear their allegiances, but it's not a matter of heckoring listeners.

"Our politics inform who we are, but we're not didactic about it. Really, we hope that people can come together and maybe become influenced a little."



The Stairwell Sisters

Tubthumping



A Terrible Beauty is Reborn

Once considered a subversive influence on The Pogues, Ron Kavana's latest ambitious and emotional recording almost killed him. Literally. Colin Irwin catches a quiet word with the incorrigible Irishman.

He's mad, of course, but Ron Kavana is never less than ridiculously entertaining, a legend in his own anecdotes. He will happily talk the hind legs off a small continent of donkeys, and reminisces in awe of his first Canadian adventure in 1992 when invited by Edmonton Folk Music Festival director Terry Wickham to put together a band made up of festival guests to headline the Sunday night concert after Toots and the Maytals failed to show.

"Man I was out there with this amazing band," he recalls, all aglow. "In guitar paradise with Amos Garrett on one side and Dave Lindley on the other – I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. Every time I return to Canada someone invariably comes up to me with a big grin and recalls their memory of that amazing night. A truly unforgettable experience – as good as it gets. Then there was the time I got put off the

festival site in Canmore for drinking beer backstage. Shame – it's a lovely festival and I've never been asked back, but that's another story."

Never one to shirk a challenge, Ron recently completed a project that even by his larger-than-life standards was breathtaking. Something which he says he'd been preparing all his life – *Irish Ways*, a lavish four-CD box set subtitled "The story of Ireland in song, music and poetry", complete with a 40,000-word book detailing the entire history of Ireland. Like I say, he's mad...

"Ambitious to the point of folly," he concedes wryly. "But I've been listening to and playing Irish music all my life, reading Irish literature and history, and took three years out of my musical career to come to terms with and try and understand my Irish identity and the part it plays in my life, as well as the part I can play in my country's life. But although I could hardly have been better prepared for the challenge, it damn near finished me off."

He started work on it seven years ago after moving back home to Cork following several years in England. But the

project seemed scuppered when thieves broke into his house and stole all the recordings, as well as recording equipment and instruments. Even worse, Ron is a diabetic and the shock triggered a horrible illness, which affected his hearing, vision, speech and sense of balance and which he assumed was a stroke. It turned out to be Bell's palsy, which effectively sidelined him for another year. "I'm told I have it permanently but I can keep it in check by careful control of my diabetes and avoiding as much stress as possible. It was debilitating and depressing but I was damned if I was going to accept being permanently disabled so I fought it in every way I could – with diet, exercise, physio, attitude, etc., basically a whole change of lifestyle. Gradually my health returned to a kind of normality and I got the project up and running for the second time."

He didn't want to take an academic approach with *Irish Ways*, and using traditional material wherever he could and writing his own songs where he couldn't, he aimed it squarely at ordinary people, anxious that it should be seen as "a tool of reconciliation" accessible to all.

"There's a very tricky line between attempting to write something sufficiently articulate to be taken seriously while remaining accessible to the man on the street. My chief concern was that the songs be taken seriously, hence the long essay of introduction which states my case for the importance of songs in a historical context. This obviously applies to my own songs, but especially to the traditional songs like *Rising Of The Moon*, *Roddy McCorley*, *The Foggy Dew*, etc. Songs with lyrics which cried out for serious consideration and thereby demanded sensitive arrangements rather than the high-spirited, uptempo, jingoistic, triumphal-march treatments to which such songs are so often subjected by the barstool patriot, rabble-rousing ballad groups still so prominent in Irish music."

Recording it was an intensely emotional experience and he talks of choking while singing the lines "The bravest fell and the requiem bell rang mournfully and clear" and "Britannia's huns with their long-necked guns" in *The Foggy Dew*. "The

Tubthumping

imagery is so strong that I was momentarily transported to Dublin in 1916 and the madness, the futility of the sacrifice of men 'who fought their fight that freedom's light might shine in through the foggy dew.' Andy Martin and Gino Lupari were present as I did that vocal and felt that I should perhaps re-record the two lines but I decided to leave it be as those tears were as real as it gets. The bottom line is that I prefer the realism of warts 'n' all production to the sanitized perfection of cleaning up or repairing every beat or note perceived to be less than perfect. I believe the endless repairing of multi-track recordings is robbing Irish music of its soul."

Various other artists contribute to the collection, but one criticism was that the volume of material is so heavy it needs more varied voices to carry it off. There were more, he says, but they were lost in the robbery and budget prevented many replacements being introduced. "Right up to the final mixes I attempted to persuade Proper (record company) that professional actors could do a much better job of the narrations than I did, but they liked it as is..."

One voice that is heard on it is his old compadre Shane MacGowan, whom he's known since Shane's days singing with punk band the Nips and selling records in Soho Market. He might very well have joined Shane when he formed Poguemahone, except that Ron was living in New York at the time. Shane did ask Ron to join the Pogues when Cait O'Riordan left the band to marry Elvis Costello and he even recorded the *Sid and Nancy* soundtrack with them, but the move was blocked by manager Frank Murray because, Ron believes, Murray thought he'd be a "subversive" influence. How anyone could be a subversive influence on the Pogues beggars belief, but Pogues talk inevitably begs the question, how is Shane? "When I last saw him, quite sad," says Ron. "A terrible waste of a great talent and a man I think of as a friend. Before he started using heavy drugs he was the finest of company – the highly intelligent and, yes, sensitive soul indicated by his lyrics. He's a voracious reader and media freak with a photographic memory and razor-sharp wit. He and I used to share

hotel rooms quite a bit and although we disagreed on many things there was never a cross word between us. I'd dearly love to see him back to his old self."

Irish Ways may have nearly killed him but Kavana has had a flurry of recording activity since, including a trio album with Mick Coyne and Dave Hennessey and a traditional album of duets with Anne Armstrong. A glutton for punishment, he's even – whisper it quietly – started work on a followup to *Irish Ways*. "I daren't say too much about it here as it involves Canada and I feel it's such a good idea that if I let the word out some cheeky Newfie whippersnapper might try to pip me to the post. Suffice to say that it is for '07 release and that I'm already in discussion with various people about Canadian dates..."

The man is incorrigible.

Deep Dark Roots

Swinging fiddles, angelic voices and an assured swagger pervades Dry Bones, the much-anticipated debut from Outlaw Social. The most exciting band to emerge from the West Coast in years, reckons Tony Montague.

Outlaw Social was conceived one evening three years ago at the Lucky Bar in Victoria, BC, when Oliver Swain was made an offer he couldn't refuse by two young women with music in their mouths and good times on their minds.

The bassist and singer – a founding member of the Bills (formerly The Billhilly Band) – had been out of town for some years. After playing with Scrüj MacDuhk in Winnipeg, and then, when the band split, recording with Ruth Moody and Jeremy Penner, he'd wandered off south in a van, bound for the Appalachian hills and the bayous of Cajun country, following his muse. For eight months he played bass with his friends the Red Stick Ramblers, from Louisiana. But he wanted to do more singing. Now he was home, seeking new inspirations.

As he stood at the bar, Oliver became aware of two pairs of eyes glued on him. Pharis Patenaude and Catherine Black, whom he recalled as music fans from his Bill Hilly days, were staring with disbelief. The girls, who performed together as old-time roots duo Horsefly, had just that evening been talking about Oliver – how they



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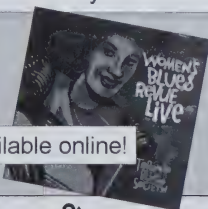
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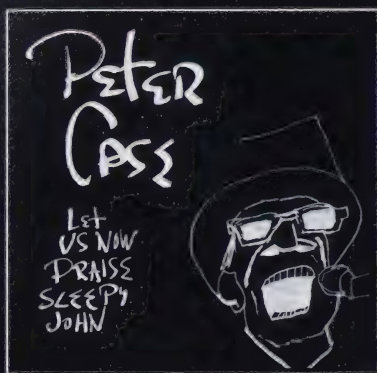
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Win a copy of Peter Case's new recording
Let Us Now Praise Sleepy John



Peter Case's rather good latest release, *Let Us Now Praise Sleepy John* pays tribute to the likes of Robert Johnson, Woody Guthrie, Blind Willie McTell, Bob Dylan and, of course, Sleepy John Estes. "I'm calling my music folk because folk is really just old songs, but that's not really what it is," he tells David McPherson on page 22. "It's influenced by folk but I also take from traditional blues, country, and Irish music and then I tell my stories."

And the nice people at Outside Music has provided us with six copies to give away. So, to win one all you have to do is answer the following questions correctly and e-mail your answers to penguineggscompetition@shaw.ca. Put Peter Case in the subject line. Don't forget to include a postal mailing address so we can forward your prize. And please put a name on your entry. We will not attempt to contact 'toothfairy' or anyone else who fails to include the appropriate information. Good luck.

Q 1: Peter Case was born in Buffalo, NY, what other celebrated singer-songwriter was born there?

Q 2: Peter Case recorded which Mississippi John Hurt song with former Blaster, Dave Alvin

Q 3: Peter Case made an album of what he described as "tribal folk" with which acclaimed producer?

The answers to the Maria Mulduar *Naughty, Bawdy & Blue* CDs and John Prine T-Shirts competition are: Q 1: Amos Garrett. Q 2: Paul Anka. Q 3: Ma Rainey's bottom.

The winners are: Brian Power, Flesherton, ON; Rick Budd, Edmonton, AB; Randy Kelly, Thunder Bay, ON; Bo Lowney, Newton, MA; Debora Misicione, Dundas, ON; Al Meyer, Burnaby, BC; Mary Boudreau, Chester, NS; David Kidney, Dundas, ON; Jannine Cox, Etobicoke, ON; Mike Hill, Orillia, ON; Bill Friedman, Toronto, ON; Max McLaughlin, Telkwa, BC.

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hadn't seen hide nor hair of him in ages, and wouldn't it be great if they could somehow find him and propose forming a trio.

And there he was, at the Lucky, glass in hand. The coincidence was too much. Banjo-toting Catherine and guitar-wielding Pharis temporarily lost the power of speech.

"We were just standing there against a brickwall," says Pharis, "I remember it really well, because it's quite possibly one of the oddest perfect moments in life."

"I thought to myself, 'Whatever it is, this can't be a bad thing,'" Oliver remembers. "This is going to go well, no matter what."

The two multi-instrumentalist women played a mix of old-time and bluegrass-hued country roots music, some of it traditional, along with Pharis's original songs in a similar vein. Their tastes meshed and they worked fine together, but after a couple of years they both felt the need to expand the band and explore new musical dimensions.

So the girls made their request, and the gallant Oliver complied. Horsefly – named after Pharis's hometown in B.C.'s Cariboo region – had a gig in a week's time, and he was only too glad to anchor and broaden its sound.

"That was in the fall of 2004," says Pharis. "Our next real gig was in March of 2005, when we played to 1,000 people in one of Victoria's finest theatres."

After that, things started happening fast for Outlaw Social, as the three musicians now styled themselves. They soon started work on a demo, which turned into an EP project, and resulted in the trio morphing into a quintet.

Ace electric and acoustic guitarist Adam Dobres, an old musical partner of Oliver's, was brought in for a few songs. And Kendel Carson of Vancouver's Paperboys added some hot fiddling with a Celtic colour. The five musicians made such a good fit, musically and socially, that they stayed together and have become one of the most exciting roots-based bands to emerge on the West Coast scene in recent years.

"That EP took us five months to do, because bringing in two new members made things grow and change a lot," Oliver recalls.

The seven-song recording garnered huge critical acclaim out West for its impeccable musicianship and soulful sound. The gigs rolled in and the band got booked to play major festivals in B.C. and Washington State. In March of this year, Outlaw Social went into the studio to make its debut, *Dry Bones*.

"There are a lot of different influences, some very traditional sounds, stringband music, and there's also a lot that's contemporary in Pharis's writing and Adam's guitar playing," says Oliver. "The album allowed us to explore all our sources of inspiration, draw them together better, and deepen the diversity."

"Everything was recorded live, together, with beautiful vintage mikes," Pharis chips in. "We have to be able to play together to be able to capture the right sound. There were moments in the studio when our jaws would all drop and we'd go 'That's it – right there!'"

Dry Bones opens with *When He's Gone*, an original song by Pharis that has an old jugband feel and features the angelically tight voices of Pharis, Catherine and Oliver. Kendel's swinging fiddle leads on the next cut, the jaunty *Raven* by Martha Scanlan. There are three traditional pieces, including the eerily gorgeous title song, with Oliver's remarkable, wide-ranging voice.

It's not all old-time. Bob Dylan's obscure but wonderful *Odds and Ends* (from the *Basement Tapes*) gets a shit-kicking treatment featuring Dobres's twangy guitar and

is performed with a touch of swagger that brings to mind Fairport Convention's classic *Cajun Woman*.

There's only one of Oliver's own compositions on the album, but it's a killer. *Roll and Go* begins with his voice and simple bass alone and it stays that way, aside from a touch of low-key harmony from Pharis and Catherine. The song is bluesy, stark and resonant – like a Southern field-holler.

"Someone came up to me at the Mission folkfest and said, 'You go into the forest and play with the sounds?'," recalls Oliver. "And I just looked at her and felt naked, 'Like, how do you know?'" When I listen to field recordings of traditional music – whether from North America, Africa, Asia or Europe – I feel there's an incredibly broad palette that was used.

"We could talk about how that's changed – how the influence of recorded and broadcast music has created a much greater consensus in terms of what's considered good tone or a nice sound. It's good to have those influences – but for myself right now I get a real kick out of going different places with my voice, and there's definitely a few on the record."

Dry Bones is the work of a group of friends dedicated to creating new traditional music with deep roots, and soul by the spade.

"We love to play at old-time jams where you just get together in a circle as tight as possible," says Pharis. "I play fiddle as well, and Ollie plays clawhammer banjo, and we all rotate and pick up different in-



Outlaws live at Vancouver Island's Musicfest

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struments and just do tune after tune. It's almost a meditation, where you'll play for 20 minutes without realizing it, just moving head and feet.

"It's not about showing off or solos or checking out what someone else is doing – it's about listening and playing together as closely as you can. That's what's really drawn us to this music. I think, and the traditions behind it – where and how the songs were made, and how they've changed."

As for the name Outlaw Social, Oliver has his own take on its significance: "We're the best of friends and we love to take chances. Deciding to make a life playing roots music is basically to exclude ourselves from much of the mainstream, commercial world.

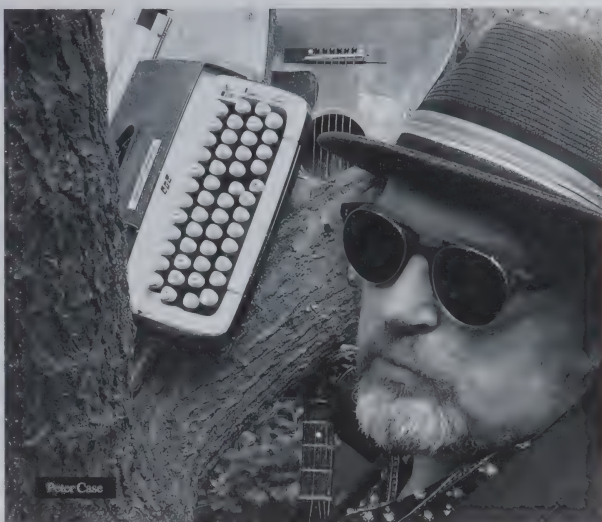
"We're on the fringe by definition, which in every genre is always the most interesting part. Utah Phillips said to me once, 'The problem with the music industry is everyone's trying to make a killing, but there are so few opportunities for that. If you try to make a living, suddenly the whole world is open. There are many ways to do that while staying true to yourself, if you're just trying to hold to what you love.'"

California Blues

Peter Case planned *In Praise Of Sleepy John* for almost 20 years. While it pays tribute to such influences as John Estes and Woody Guthrie, it's also a seething condemnation of contemporary American politics. "I'm calling my music folk," he tells David McPherson.

Coming of age as "a young acid casualty looking for a place to land," in blue-collar Buffalo was not for Peter Case. The songwriter in the making had to escape. "Head west young man" was the mantra meandering through his mind. Finally, the plea got so loud he heeded its call and boarded a Greyhound, California bound.

Case describes the despair of his teenage years in New York State in the first chapter of his recent memoir *As Far as You Can Get Without a Passport*: "It's bleak wintertime in Buffalo, and all the world looks flat, as if it's being projected on a movie screen. Nothing looks real, and I'm the first kid on



my block to notice."

Landing in San Francisco in March 1973, Case immediately fell in love with the counter-culture metropolis. "The streets of the city are blazing, completely alive," he writes on page 11. "I'm happy to wander any neighborhood, with no idea where I'm going. People everywhere, travelers, hipsters, crazy down-and-outs, beautiful women dressed like gypsies, barefoot hippies, workers, hustlers and dealers by the score, guys just out of prison, AWOLs from the Marines, bicycle messengers by the hundreds, pushing their clunky two wheelers up and down Market Street..."

I catch up with the colourful songwriter via cellphone as he's walking down Market Street. It's appropriate we chat about his new disc – *Let Us Now Praise Sleepy John* – as he strolls along the historic thoroughfare since it's where his musical maturation began 34 years ago. Case arrived in the City by the Bay ready to change the world and make music that stood the test of time. He trolled the streets, worked odd jobs, and performed as a street singer – telling tales of the landscapes he saw, the people he met, and the injustices he witnessed.

— is the album Case has wanted to make

since his self-titled solo disc in 1986. It's raw, intimate, politically charged, and fuses the influences of all the song slingers – bluesman and folkies – who have come before him, from Robert Johnson and Blind Willie McTell to Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan.

"As a kid, I was a big fan of this type of music – all the country-blues guys and English guys who are my heroes," he says.

Some of Case's other songwriting heroes include Robert Wilkins – a Memphis blues player from the '20s, whom he covers with *Get Away Blues* – and English guitar great Richard Thompson, who guests on *Every 24 Hours*. The disc honours Tennessee bluesman Sleepy John Estes, known for his "crying" vocal style. The bulk of the songs came to Case during a prolonged period of sleep deprivation and they capture his feelings towards the current state of America.

"The songs are all about now, how the past relates to now, and how the future looks from now," he says. "A lot of the album is about the drift America has been taking in the last 10 years, but it's also about people I meet, things I hear, and stories. I'm not the type of person who writes in a journal and makes up songs. I'm not a fiction writer. I

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love language and the music of words and I'm trying to tell my stories in the most compelling way."

The Internet has brought new fans to discover Case's compelling tales. "People are coming to music in new ways," he explains. "The old gatekeepers who used to tell everyone what to think like *Rolling Stone* and MTV don't mean much anymore ... word-of-mouth is the new MTV."

While Case loathes the music industry, he's lucky to be with a young, hip label (Yep Roc). "I like Yep Roc because they are outsiders too," he says. "They love music and that's something I've never experienced at a record company before."

Case doesn't deem his music pure folk, but he loves the intimacy and spontaneity the genre creates.

"The greatest thing in life is to have something happen you really didn't expect," Case says. "When I started playing solo after the Plimsouls, I never felt more naked on stage as my first show without the big wall of sound behind me. I came out with an acoustic guitar to a few hundred people and all of a sudden I felt really stripped and naked ... it felt more dangerous than rock 'n' roll."

For Case, rock 'n' roll is a lot more predictable because of its inherent complexity with the co-ordination of so many instruments – something he says sometimes precludes a certain kind of spontaneity.

"Doing the solo thing, I can turn on a dime and people can hear everything I say and they can talk back to me," he says. There is a whole interplay with the audience. When punk came out, the audience was supposed to be as important as the band, and that ethic is true in folk.

"I'm calling my music folk because folk is really just old songs, but that's not really what it is. It's influenced by folk but I also take from traditional blues, country, and Irish music and then I tell my stories.... I don't really use that word [folk]. I wish I had a better word to describe what it is."

Get Case talking politics and the conversation heats up.

"My album is more than a little political," he says. "I wrote 100 'Bush is a Moron' songs, but they are not really effective and



Bonnie Dobson circa late '60s

Photo by: Nick Sangianno

things you want to sing, so what I came up with is this batch of songs. *Ain't Gonna Worry No More* hits it head on in as deep a way as I've heard anyone hit it.

"What is going on in America is they have created this huge dichotomy between the rich and poor and the war just supports that and sucks away all the attention from what they are doing domestically," Case continues. "It is just diabolical. We are at a very shaky crossroads where it could go either way. I believe in America in a Walt Whitman kind of way and in a constitutional way, but now it's just an experiment gone awry."

The tour de force *Ain't Gonna Worry No More* sums up this "experiment gone awry" through these couplets: "Now I'm traveling a world that's filled with war zones/ listening to music's we've destroyed/ praying to a God who's just a tyrant/ for work that's just like being unemployed."

While it's unclear which way the U.S. is going in terms of its political climate, what is clear is that Case will be on their case and continue to write literate, topical songs that speak to the masses.

"My songs are the kind of songs that communicate where I'm coming from," he says. "I believe I could walk into any bar in North America and sing them and the people there would get what I was talking about."

Morning Glory

In 1960 Toronto folk singer Bonnie Dobson wrote *Morning Dew* – a song since covered by the likes of the Grateful Dead, Rod Stewart, Tim Rose and countless others. Dobson has lately reactivated her career in England. Ken Hunt provides the historic details.

In June 2007 a singer revealed a little of herself, a little of others like Jackson C Frank, for the first time in a very long time, the last time being 1989. Her children had heard her singing around the house but never on stage as a headlining act. The stage was London's Queen Elizabeth Hall and she was part of this year's Jarvis Cocker-curated Meltdown festival, so no small affair. She was the last of six acts to take the stage in The Lost Ladies of Folk concert. The singer whose clear soprano cut right through was Bonnie Dobson, who, since 1969, has lived in England.

Although Bonnie Dobson had spent decades out of the music business, her name is synonymous with one original composition. Not that she is complaining. *Morning Dew* proved very helpful financially. But people tend to focus on that one strand

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of her story to the exclusion of her other, many and varied achievements.

Dobson championed Canadian folk songs. One, *Peter Amberley*, provided Dylan with *I Pity The Poor Immigrant's* melody. (The 1962 Philadelphia Folk Festival version on The Prestige/Folklore Years, Volume Four (1995) makes the case more eloquently than words.) She picked up early on new songwriting like Ewan MacColl's *First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* and Ralph McTell's *Streets of London*. She proclaimed love in an earthily robust way in her own *Stay With Me Tonight and You Don't Know* ("You don't know/And you'll never understand/Why I've got to leave you/And go with this other man").

Talk Me For A Walk, as *Morning Dew* was originally titled, appeared in New York's *Broadside* magazine though the 1962 recording languished unheard until *The Best of Broadside 1962-1988* (Smithsonian Folkways, 2000). It is one of the era's landmark songs addressing fears of mass destruction. Like *Come Away, Melinda* or *I Come And Stand At Every Door* but more so, and it travelled farther.

Bob Weir, currently of RatDog, played this apocalyptic hymn for 30 years during his tenure with the Grateful Dead: "I looked forward to doing that song. We did that song so slow, at times it got pretty rubbery. There was so much room to do stuff. If everybody took their time and it didn't get too busy then it was quite spacious." Ineluctably associated with Jerry Garcia, who used to sing it, it remains sacrosanct to his memory. RatDog has kept it that way. Dead biographer Dennis McNally recalls the song's arrival: "Jerry's friend Barney - Laird Grant - found the Fred Neil and Vince Martin album [*Tear Down The Walls*, 1964] and brought it to Jerry. It was part of the repertoire at least by the Be-In. And then, of course, on the first album [1967]." What happened to the song subsequently is less simple...

The youngest of three children, Bonnie Dobson was born in Toronto in November 1940. From Swansea the family moved to Parkdale, and when she was from seven to 11 the family lived in hovel-like circum-

stances in Long Branch. Her father was a black-balled trade unionist and left-wing political activist at a time when the RCMP was assiduously acting as McCarthy's little helpers north of the border.

"We lived in an emergency housing project," she grimaces, her voice a mixture of Canadian and English vowels and cadences, "so I know about ghetto life. It was a bloody ghetto. It was a converted army barracks. They were wooden huts covered with tarpaper."

Her sister, Margot, she recalls, "ran with a group of kids and a lot of her friends were interested in folk music. In fact, a number of them eventually formed a Canadian group, the Travellers. I was hanging around and I got interested. Seeger used to come up and give concerts. I guess I first heard Pete at one of their socials."

One of her sister's friends, Art Shimazu, tipped her off about a summer camp in Quebec. Misapplying the lessons learned from an English assignment about writing job applications, she lied about her age ("You had to be 15 to be junior councilor") and landed the job at Camp Beaver. It brought her into the world of Pete Seeger, Leon Bibb and Earl Robinson.

"I was just a little raving folkie and interested in it from that time on," she says. "When we were at camp we had

little groups doing quasi-Weaver-type things and other people played. But I didn't play. When I was 16 I got my guitar and I bonded with it in my bedroom. Wonderful! Give your kids a guitar!" It was a Harmony with "killer action"; eventually a Martin 00-28 became hers.

Things snowballed. Aged 16, she attended the Weavers' legendary Carnegie Hall concert. University and temporary work in Shell Oil's billing department lost all attraction. In March 1960 she got a phone call from Marty Bochner, a concert promoter handling Odetta and Seeger. He suggested meeting Paul Endicott, then acting for Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Ed McCurdy, Oscar Brand and others. The next week while staying with her grandmother in Brighton, ON, her father rang about a letter from the U.S.A. It was the offer of work and the start of a new folksinging life in the United States that lasted from 1960 until 1965 with five solo albums on Prestige and Mercury.

During 1964 and 1965 she shared an apartment with the remarkable U.S. singer Judy Roderick on St. Mark's Place in Manhattan. "That was just a brilliant time to be there. Everyone was just starting. I sang at Gerde's [Folk City]. Everybody sang. We used to have these wonderful hoot nights on Monday nights. One night these two young guys came in and sang



Bonnie Dobson on the comeback trail

Photo by: Alan Forth



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together and we thought they were really good. And that was Simon and Garfunkel. Of course, Dylan was there. I always say I knew Dylan when he was really, really funny!"

By 1965 the East Village was turning nasty-druggy. It coincided with her appearing at a music festival in Sault Sainte Marie, ON, alongside Ian and Sylvia, Alanis Obomsawin, the Travellers and Gordon Lightfoot. "It was such a fabulous festival I thought, 'What am I doing living in New York?'" Within a month she had relocated to Toronto.

She fell into work on the CBC, notably the celebration-of-confederation series *1967 And All That*. She sang, and soaked up folk songs, reminiscences and, thanks to Helen Creighton, the author of *Folk Songs of Nova Scotia*, ghost stories. The CBC connection led to the 1969 album Bonnie Dobson made "for the CBC that then got bought by RCA. We actually went into the studio and did it because the CBC still releases albums, but that was the early days. Then RCA bought it and I went on to do another album [*Good Morning Rain*, 1970] for them. *For The Love of Him*, the Mercury album, was interesting. We recorded *Guantanamo* [spelled *Quantanamerra* on that 1964 LP] on that and we did it with a full backing. With the exception of two tracks, it was just me and guitar. We did a full orchestral backing for *Quantanamerra* and wanted to release it as a single." "It'll never go: it's all in Spanish," Mercury replied.

"Six months later, the Sandpipers brought it out. I don't think mine would have gone anywhere, but... I always had very good taste in songs, actually. I chose good ones. I was the first person other than Peggy Seeger to record *First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*. I put it on my first Prestige album. Everybody was learning that song from me. Peggy and Ewan were on the bill of the Denver Folk Festival. After all the concerts were over, we all adjourned to the Exodus Club. Everybody was getting up and singing. Peggy got up and sang this song with the banjo. To say, 'The first time ever I lay with you.' Pardon me? A very explicit song for its time. It was quite a

dangerous song to sing at that time."

But back to *Morning Dew*. Dobson wrote it in California, triggered by the 1959 cinematic adaptation of Nevil Shute's novel, *On The Beach*. Fred Neil's cover took it to new places beyond the Dead. But in those more innocent, less business-savvy days, Dobson acquiesced to Tim Rose making some lyrical changes before she had time to mull over matters. The *Tear Down The Walls* recording precipitated her getting the song published. Much to her distress, Rose claim-jumped one half of half a song. Afterwards, she had plenty of time to appreciate the consequences. "He never actually said, until I forced him to make a declaration on stage at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, that I'd written that song – and I did force him. I went to a lawyer. I said I'd had enough of this crap."

Rose died in 2002, but *Morning Dew* goes marching on. As Weir points out, "It was another of those tunes where you could almost make your meaning or just sit there and dream while you were listening to it." Dobson had nuclear trouble in mind. But its bleak vision lends itself to interpretative transferability, notably the out-of-control environmental apocalypse. Ongoing reissue programs of her work are generating new heat. There is a cache of

long-forgotten recordings. And, let's hope, the possibility of further live appearances and her introduction to another generation. Bonnie Dobson's name has endured.

With thanks to Gary Cristall, Sabine Kindel and Dennis McNally.

Perfect Melancholy

Ollabelle's gorgeous harmonies on covers of Son House and The Carter Family has won support from the likes of T Bone Burnett and Emmylou Harris. Peter North feasts on an organic delight.

It's Sunday night and a couple of hours from nightfall. New York's mini-choir of roots-bound angels have just been introduced to the faithful at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival.

Early in the life of Ollabelle, the quintet set Sunday evenings aside for a weekly gig in a NYC club and play the collective role of host as well as house band, under the banner of Sunday School for Sinners.

Five years on, Ollabelle's often-hypnotic vocal blend, that rises out of ballads and mid-tempo tunes laced with traditional feels, has brought them a great deal of deserved critical acclaim.

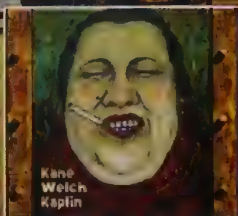
Ten minutes into a scheduled 50-minute set, the inhabitants of this natural amphithe-



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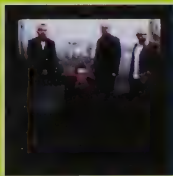


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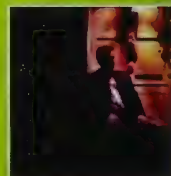


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"Russ is such a solid player, and his soloing is so lyrical. He's one of those great improvisers, like Jerry Douglas and Stuart Duncan, that always have a great melody in their solos." - Bryan Sutton

MARTIN SIMPSON *Prodigal Son* (COM 4466)

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atre seem to be breathing deeply and in time to the songs Fiona McBain, Glenn Patscha, Amy Helm, Byron Issacs and Tony Leone are pulling from their two discs, a self-titled debut from 2004 and last year's *Riverside Battle Songs*.

For the patrons of this weekend pilgrimage, who had spent hours scurrying from one workshop to another over a three-day period, Sunday night had now become a period of rest. Here they were, stopping long enough to be lovingly but firmly embraced by the sound of Ollabelle, and ultimately replenished.

"In the beginning we were friends playing in each other's bands and helping out on one another's projects. Then Fiona answered a call from a bartender booker named Roger Davis at a club called Nine C and we ended up being the little house band she put together for the gig," recalls Issacs, who describes Ollabelle's sound as "one that is a rich treasure trove of songs about life and death."

"It's coping music, music that brings people together," added Issacs, who sings, plays bass and a variety of stringed instruments and who stepped into the spotlight as a writer on *Riverside Battle Songs* as he co-wrote *Heavens Pearls*, *Northern Star* and *Gone Today*.

As the band did in the recording studio, Ollabelle comes to its growing audience by emphasizing different voices, and combinations of leads, choruses and harmonies, from one song to the next.

"We worked out a lot of things on the fly early on and took advantage of a situation that gave us the opportunity to work on harmonies. Before long we had some big arrangements to work with," continued Issacs, who, after two years of hard road work, sees the second disc as one that captures a collective that has really become, in the truest sense of the term, a band.

During Ollabelle's first recording sessions in 2003, only three originals were recorded by Steve Rosenthal, who caught the group at Nine C and promptly offered up some studio time on spec. The product of Rosenthal's hunch wasn't something that was going to languish in any studio vault for long. The recordings landed in T Bone Burnett's lap and the debut Ollabelle disc

was released on his DMZ label.

Keeping good company continues to be an Ollabelle trait, and when it came time to record album number two the band tapped into the talents of Larry Campbell, formerly with Bob Dylan's road band.

With Campbell, the band served up 10 originals on a 13-song set. But when it comes to picking covers, the band goes to timeless sources and then puts a unique spin on what has inspired them. On the first disc it was the music from bluesmen such as Son House (*John The Revelator*) and country-folk heroes like The Carter Family (*The Storms Are On The Ocean*) that curled up with a pensive reading of the Jagger/Richards gem *I Am Waiting*. A Sea Island Singers number titled *Before This Time*, arranged by folklorist Alan Lomax, kicked off the disc and set the tone for the entire affair.

With additional guidance from Campbell, who knocked the group out with his production of the latest Dixie Hummingbirds album, Ollabelle's *Riverside Battle Songs* is an organic delight that at one moment strips everything down to the core and the next employs wafting instrumental soundscapes. Not only is everyone on board, the accomplished player Campbell, who Issacs refers to as Captain Manyhands, pitched in on guitars, lap and pedal steel, banjo and fiddle.

"There is a telepathy that comes with our

live shows that results in our never playing a song the same way twice," states Issacs, who like his bandmates switches instruments frequently throughout a performance.

Along with gigs at American festivals and appearances in Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton, Ollabelle had recently played Nashville's Ryman Auditorium with Amy Helm's father, Levon, the legendary drummer-vocalist from The Band.

As part of his *Ramble On The Road* show, Ollabelle received high praise and were singled out in a review in the *Nashville Tennessean* as "a glorious amalgam of The Band, Fleetwood Mac and The Flying Burrito Brothers." By the end of the evening the host, his band and Ollabelle had been joined on stage by Emmylou Harris, Buddy Miller, Sam Bush, Sheryl Crow, Ricky Skaggs, John Hiatt and Leroy Parnell in what was called "one of the most extraordinary nights of music in recent memory" by the same columnist.

"The crowd went nuts. People were pounding the back of the pews in the Ryman. Levon moved out front and and Tony (Leone) took over the drums and Glen (Patscha) was at the piano. It was like they were doing the Richard Manuel and Garth Hudson thing when Levon would move away from the drum kit in Band shows. What a night," said Issacs, who was still relishing that memory.



Tubthumping

Back on stage at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Ollabelle are nearing the end of the set and have just come out of a sweet but perfectly melancholy reading of the Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter tune *Brokedown Palace* and were about to launch into *Riverside*, known to many as *Down By The Riverside*.

In Ollabelle's hands the song's melody has been altered and the anti-war message of the piece, as Isaacs notes, "rings a lot clearer".

Making things ring clearer seems to be the Ollabelle credo, and one can only hope this collective of wonderfully talented individuals sticks together for the long run.

What Katey Did Next

Kate Rusby has a new album out – always a cause for celebration around these parts. While acclaimed for her wonderful interpretations of traditional material, this time around she focuses more on her own songwriting. Chris Nickson squeezes a word in.

You can talk all you want about Eliza Carthy and her likes, but the young British female folksinger who's enjoyed the greatest success is Kate Rusby. After a stint with the Poozies and a highly regarded duo album with Kathryn Roberts, she's put out several delicious solo albums, including the new *Awkward Annie*, offering interpretations of traditional material that sound effortlessly contemporary, along with her own, impressive songwriting.

But she doesn't limit herself to folk music; there are also collaborations with indie musician Robbie Woomble of Idlewild and a famous duet with former Westlife singer Ronan Keating that made the British top 10. Yet from childhood, folk music has been the major part of her life. Her parents "were always playing and singing around the house and in the car, so me, my brother and sister were picking up songs from the word go. Then my two other main influences are Dave Burland and Nic Jones. My dad used to be a sound engineer at festivals and gigs and it was at Barnsley folk festival that I sat listening to Dave and decided that



I might like to be a professional singer. And Nic, I never got to see him play live, but his records were always on in the house, he was absolutely amazing. I still never leave home without a CD of his in my car."

Like Jones, she brings a casual intimacy to her music. She's one of the few performers who can appear in a large hall and make it seem like your living room. Yet it's a knack that seems quite natural and unconscious.

"I have never thought about it, I just find songs and write songs and sing them," she admits. "I spent a lot of time listening to the likes of Dave and Nic, so perhaps some of my style has come from there. And as for concerts, I am just a natterer, I can't stop talking!"

The new CD – her eighth – marks a turning point for Rusby, the first time she'd produced herself. Several of her previous discs were produced by her husband, fiddler John McCusker. But they split up two years ago (he still plays in her crack touring band, along with box legend Andy Cutting), which meant it just wasn't the right time to be in the studio with him as "it's very intense being in the studio so it was the wrong time for that. John came and played lots on

it though, he's such a great musician and lovely fella, I missed having him involved more, but also loved producing it. So this record was going to sound a little different, not vastly because it's still me singing my songs of course!"

In the past she's included a few of her own compositions on disc, almost tentatively, but this time around almost half of the 12 tracks are from the Rusby pen, and all very good. She seems to have found a balance between originals and the traditional.

"My first love is the traditional side of things, but I do enjoy writing, too, so I will probably always be a bit of both," she says. "I like the challenge of taking an old song and making it my own, retelling an old story, bringing it to life again out of an old book. I have never really thought of myself as a songwriter though; they just seem to pop out of my head late at night. It's very strange."

There's also a bonus cut on the disc, a cover of the Kinks' *The Village Green Preservation Society* that was the theme for the Jennifer Saunders sitcom *Jam and Jerusalem*. But side projects like that offer refreshing variety.

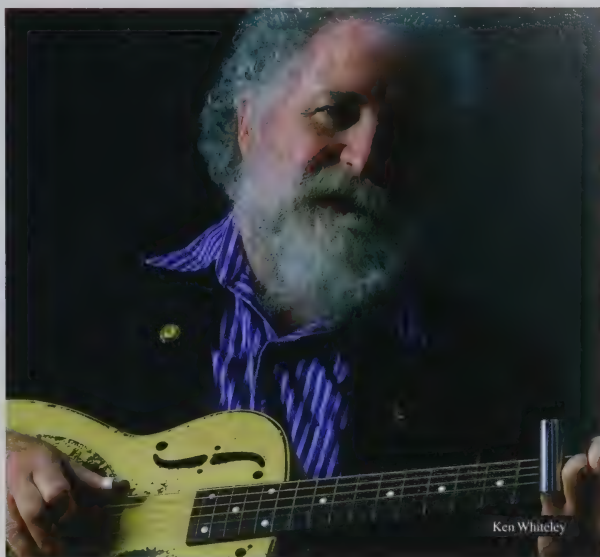
"It's always lovely when different things come along, and so far they have all been very enjoyable. I have been very lucky in that sense. I have been able to make the music I want to make, and every now and again I get asked to be part of really exciting things, like *Jam and Jerusalem*, or the film called *Heartlands* that I was involved in, and I got asked to write a couple of songs for a children's animation called *Jack Frost* and, of course, to do the song with Ronan Keating, and lots of other things besides. It doesn't distract from what I do, it's a lovely change without having to change my own music."

She's also a canny businesswoman, running her own successful label, Pure, and studio in her native South Yorkshire. From humble beginnings it's become a remarkable little cottage industry.

"Years ago, when I was first thinking of making a record, lots of people were saying to us to be careful, and don't sign your life away, and I was thinking, 'What, this is folk music and surely everyone is honest!'" she explains. "At the time my dad was lecturing on instrument repair at Leeds College of Music, but he was looking for something new to do, so we wondered if it was something we could do ourselves. Pure, apparently, is the Greek meaning of the name Kate, that's why we chose it. My mum works for us doing the accounts, and my sister, Emma, does the PR amongst other things, and my brother, Joe, is my sound engineer, both live and in the studio, so quite a family affair, really. People ask me if it's weird working with your family, but it's not. I see it as a family butcher or baker or something. In fact it's a great thing working with your family as there are no trust issues."

So these days Kate Rusby is a star. But it's a fact that still amazes her.

"I do stop and wonder, a lot. When we are standing at the side of the stage in Sheffield City Hall or somewhere and there's loads of people all come dressed up to come and see us for their night out, I do wonder sometimes, 'Do they all know what they've come to? Do they know it's a lass from Barnsley singing songs?' The support I've had is very humbling. I am a very lucky girl!"



Mister Versatility

*Ken Whiteley's various musical achievements are already the stuff of legend. And now the Toronto-based, multi-instrumentalist has just released the rather good, **One World Dance**. **Pat Langston** waltzes into this interview.*

Maybe if we start a petition, he'll do it.

Ken Whiteley – whose sprawling musical knowledge of folk, blues, gospel, you name it, once earned him the label of "a playing encyclopedia" – really needs to shoehorn his memories into a book. Sort of a "the story so far" because, despite his trademark bush of whitening hair and beard, Whiteley's still only 56.

The idea of a Whiteley book isn't mine. It was Chris White, artistic director of the Ottawa Folk Festival where Ken Whiteley has played several times, who threw out the idea recently. As White noted, "If you think about Canadian folk and roots music, he's got an incredible perspective."

White is bang on about this restless and accomplished performer (his latest, ex-

cellent solo release is *One World Dance*), songwriter (300-plus tunes), collaborator (the Whiteley Brothers, with bro Chris; one-third of the beloved Scarlett, Washington and Whiteley), recording artist (six Juno nominations; credits on albums by Leon Redbone, Willie P. Bennett and many others), award-winning producer (Raffi, Fred Penner), multi-instrumentalist (20 including mandolin and guitar), and all-round folk-roots guy (former artistic director of the Mariposa Folk Festival; co-founder of Borealis Records). Oh yeah, he's also the dad of bassist Ben Whiteley, who plays on the new album, and uncle of singer-songwriter Jenny Whiteley.

Does the word engaged spring to mind?

Sounding far younger than his age, Whiteley, speaking by phone from his home in Toronto, brims with posterity-worthy memories, stories and humour. Pennsylvania-born of Canadian parents but raised in Toronto, he still recalls the minutiae of his own early musical encounters.

"When I was five, we stayed for a summer with our great-uncle Dave. He would sing Stephen Foster songs holding his cello like a guitar. Chris and I would sit up in the attic

Tubthumping

and play these records on this wind-up 78."

His paternal grandfather, he adds, headed up Northern Ontario's Whiteley Orchestra during the 1920s and '30s. His maternal grandfather, meanwhile, "came from the tradition where everyone should always be ready to give a song or story, and he was always asking us to perform, even when we were little kids, at special gatherings."

As an elementary school student, Whiteley says with a chuckle, he was the only boy in the class who would sing out loud. By the time he was 12, he was so into folk and blues that he stopped listening to AM radio. Then, in 1965, he heard Keith Richards's slide guitar on a Rolling Stones tune and "I realized it was all a continuum and that the Stones were listening to the same things I was."

A couple of years later, Ken, older brother Chris and Tom Evans formed The Original Sloth Band, still fondly remembered by many for its folk, blues, jazz and jug-band eclecticism. The group recorded three al-

bums in the 1970s. During that same decade, Whiteley launched and ran Shire's Coffee House in Toronto's North York area.

"We bought all these chairs from a divey hotel on Jarvis Street and mounted lights in juice cans," he remembers, earning \$35 a week for his efforts. He hired, and sometimes sat in with, Brent Titcomb, Stan Rogers and other budding folk heavyweights.

Another multi-Whiteley project, the Junior Jug Band, played kids' concerts during the 1980s. Ken's own R&B outfit, the Paradise Revue, also carved out a niche.

Since then, well, you've already read the *Reader's Digest* version of Whiteley's current musical CV.

In fact, on *One World Dance* he pays tribute to his consuming passion. *That's When I Need a Song* is about exactly that.

"Songs in so many ways enrich our lives, when you feel good, when you feel bad, when you are protesting, when you're celebrating, when you're whatever," he says.

Whiteley wrote the tune, one of several featuring Amos Garrett on guitar, with fellow Toronto musician Eve Goldberg. He



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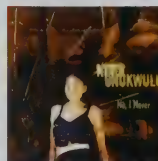
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and Goldberg also teamed up for the swing blues *Lunch Counter Encounter*. "I can get melodic, harmonic ideas perpetually but don't always have something to write," Whiteley says.

Co-writing is one way that music helps people connect. And connecting is, for Whiteley, of bedrock importance.

"All of us on this planet have a responsibility and the opportunity to connect," he says. "I've made connections with people that I couldn't speak the same language with and we've been able to play music together."

"At the most profound level, I feel in performing it's possible to create a situation where I'm a conduit for energy that's coming from beyond me and we create a big circle with the audience. Essentially, it's a spiritual pursuit for me."

All this talk of spirituality prompts the question of whether Whiteley is a religious man. Careful to underline that he's "not hung up on the forms and names of religious belief," he does say he's a Christian, pointing to his gospel albums. "But Christianity in and of itself is a vehicle, as all religions are, for us to experience the divine in our lives and to experience it between each other."

Quoting the New Testament, Whiteley adds, "Jesus said, 'Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.' And he didn't say, 'Accept me as your personal saviour,' He said, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' And who's your neighbour? He gave an example and it's not the guy in your tribe. It's whoever you encounter."

Speaking of tribes, the Whiteley clan does make music together ("Ken and Chris are the kind of people you could organize a whole folk festival around," says White). This past winter saw Ken and seven other family members converge on Ottawa for a show, a rousing event which apparently took close to a year to organize because of the performers' conflicting schedules.

And with his own busy days and nights – he's in the midst of promoting his new album, don't forget – it looks as though it'll take more than just a petition to get Whiteley working on that book. On the other hand, he says, "I have a good idea for a cookbook."



Strings 'n' Things

Tim Williams' musical interests range from Moroccan gnawa to Mexican norteño. A cornerstone of the flourishing Calgary roots scene, Williams mastery on various stringed instruments leaves Roger Levesque agog.

Tim Williams knows the importance of defining your own artistic parameters. From his early beginnings in California some 40 years ago right up to this day he has always approached things as an all-around roots musician, staying open to all of life's possibilities, even if he's best known for his familiarity with the blues.

"It's all roots music," says Williams, a citizen of Calgary, AB. "I made a deliberate decision not to limit myself."

After several blues-oriented albums in the past decade, his recent self-produced CD *Songster, Musician, Music Physicianer* comes as a superb example of that fact. The title stems from old monikers for the sort of folk troubadour who was open to absorbing the influences they met up with in their

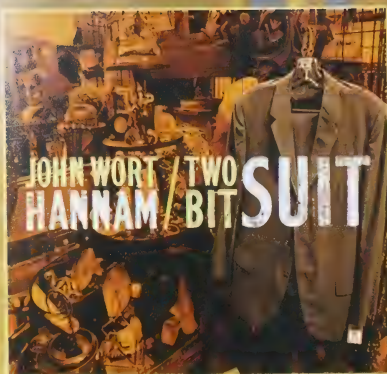
travels, a "shoe" if you will that Williams fits well.

Once the album opens with the reggae hit of *New Babylon*, his critique of consumer culture, you'll hear jazzy blues and ragtime; *Seven Hours Behind*, a deeply penetrating road song penned in Britain in the immediate aftermath of 9/11; a tribute to the largely unknown settlements of African-American immigrants in Alberta's Amber Valley; a Mexican-Hawaiian instrumental hybrid; and moving meditations on loss and loneliness.

Add refreshing covers of Mississippi Fred McDowell and the Leiber-Stoller tune *Down In Mexico* to other unexpected treats. It's all bound up in Williams' mastery of string instruments with help from musical friends like keyboardist Ron Casat, bassist Suitcase James, and drummer Kevin Belzner. Some of the best numbers feel truly out of time, something the songwriter shoots for.

"It's always a challenge. To me the true test of a good song is if you can't pinpoint the time and place it comes from."

Growing up in southern California, Williams was exposed to a rich mix of country, blues, rock 'n' roll, Mexican norteño,



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Someone recently wrote that Hannam has assumed his place beside Cockburn, Rogers, and Francey, now if only the general populace would notice...seek out Two-Bit Suit: it's a future Canadian folk classic - Red Deer Advocate

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Tubthumping

Cajun and zydeco, and exotic sounds from Hawaii and Japan. His musical epiphany came when he was just eight, when he witnessed a couple of musicians playing guitar outside a restaurant in the Mexican section of Los Angeles. His grandfather started him on Hawaiian guitar at age 13. At 15 he bought his first LP, a set of acoustic blues greats, and before long he was playing professionally, part time.

By his late teens he was opening for John Fahey and Hoyt Axton. At 20 he made his first recording, *Blues Full Circle*, for Epic Records—the label wanted to fill out its blues roster. Then a quest for fresh opportunities and disenchantment with American politics sent him north to Vancouver in 1970. On his first day there he got a gig opening for Ramblin' Jack Elliot, teaching work, and a studio session.

By this point the string-slinger was also getting notice as a songwriter, and he even won some airplay on country stations, recording two albums of country-folk, penning numbers that would later be recorded by artists like Valdy and Cindy Church. But into the mid-1980s, frustrations with the business pushed Williams to put music on hold, to take work as a horse wrangler on a ranch in southern Alberta. A chance meeting with Holger Peterson and an invitation to play the 1988 Edmonton Folk Music Festival brought him back to performing.

"It went so well that was the start of things all over again. At the time emerging recording technology was starting to be more artist-friendly, too, so I realized I could make things cost effective recording independently."

Williams relocated to Calgary in 1990 and started doing his own music, sitting in with others and writing and performing songs for live theatre. He was a natural at festivals for his versatility on various instruments and styles, and today calls on acoustic and electric guitars, Dobro, mandolin, banjo, button accordion, a norteno bass guitar and a Turkish saz, among other tools.

"I find that if you get stuck or hit a wall as a player, there's nothing like picking up another instrument to bring a fresh perspective."

It also helps that he could "play well with others". That spirit of collaboration in-

spired the all-acoustic trio with Johnny V and Rusty Reed dubbed Triple Threat. They even picked up a Juno nomination for their 1993 debut recording *Terra Firma Boogie* before disbanding in 1994.

At his peak Williams was putting in up to 275 gigs a year. Now he's scaled things back slightly for comfort's sake as he splits his time between frequent performances, demands as a producer (with more than 40 albums to his credit), and two side projects, The Electro-Fires (with Ron Casat and Suitcase James) and Highwater Jug Band (with John Rutherford and Dan Tapanila).

He also has a rare expertise for the nuances of regional blues styles and a frustration with the narrowing of blues consciousness.

"I appreciate all those styles from the sparse way that Texas guys like Lightning Hopkins play slow blues, to the African-ness of the delta blues, or the bright, happy character of the Piedmont style where you're really using guitar like a piano; or the Chicago stuff. I love it all. But to find real innovations you have to keep expanding outside the cliché of what's called 'the blues'. That's why I love people like Eric Bibb and Alvin Youngblood Hart."

In 2004 Williams found himself even farther afield when he was invited to play the International Festival of Plucked Strings in Rabat, Morocco. It's a cultural centre for the ancient Gnawa tribe whose music offers

some fascinating similarities and distant ties to the blues.

"I already had an interest in the Gnawa when I went there, and then I met up with Magid Bakas, one of the leading lights of their music. I spent two weeks hanging out with him and other players and, of course, slide guitar fits with it great. So much of the delta blues is built around a bass rhythm figure and high grace notes and rhythm shots, and much of the Gnawa falls easily into that. It was heaven."

Consider his other festival encounters with Mali's Boubacar Traore, India's Snehashish Mozumder, England's Martin Carthy, string explorer David Lindley, Afghanistan's Mushfiq Ensemble, or his encounter with Cuban blues in Havana and you begin to understand how Williams's wide embrace fits into *Songster, Musicianer, Music Physicianer*.

"My CD player in the car is as likely to have son or ranchero music playing as it is to have blues or jazz. As musicians we can all try to change the world a little bit by breaking down people's preconceptions about culture and music, in showing that music is that common language that lets us speak to one another's hearts. If you can play to 20 people or 1,000 people and show that a dialogue is possible regardless of cultural or linguistic boundaries you touch more people in doing that than anything else."



Tim Williams—acoustic

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Inherit The Wind

Those breezy chaps from Le Vent du Nord (The North Wind) just released Dans les Airs (In The Air). Not quite the tempest of albums past, but a force to reckon with due to its warmth and maturity. Yves Bernard reckons it's a breath of fresh... erm...air.

Of the movers and the shakers of traditional music in Quebec, Le Vent du Nord move and shake the most. With a touring schedule of about 100 shows a year, Le Vent's agenda is fuller than La Bottine Souriante's in their heyday. So their third release, *Dans les Airs*, has been highly anticipated by fans and critics everywhere.

The title, *Dans les Airs*, is a commonly used expression which translates literally as 'In the Air.' "It could have been titled otherwise," chuckles hurdy-gurdy player, singer, accordionist, and pianist Nicolas Boulouice. "At first we chose *Le Berger*, taken from the name of one of the songs. But when we realised we would have to explain it to our Anglophone audiences we changed our minds." *Le Berger*, pronounced bear-jay, means *The Shepherd*. *Dans les Airs* suited us better because our music travels by the wind and air. Light and airborne – these are characteristics that we try to express through our music."

"On the new CD, many songs speak of searching and questing. Nothing is fixed. Marriages are never clearly established and the characters are waiting. Many get rejected," reveals Olivier Demers, singer, fiddler, foot-tapper, mandolin player and Nicolas' companion since the beginning.

True to form, a number of drinking songs are featured on the new album, but waiting is the predominant theme. A man waits for his daughter, a lover his future, a wife her husband. "These stories have been sung for 300 years," says Nicolas. "This means that there is something very relevant in them. Traditional music has the ability to take us back to very concrete things."

On the new album, Le Vent blows with as much persistence as ever, but perhaps more gently, as if the quartet desired to al-



low these songs to breathe. Their first two discs did include quieter songs and nostalgic moments, but the biting hurdy-gurdy playing of Nicolas Boulouice always shone through. But the 'vielle à roue' on *Dans les Airs* has a very different sound. "I have a new hurdy-gurdy," Nicolas tells me. "An alto hurdy-gurdy, which is less flamboyant and less piercing, but has a much warmer sound. It allows me to play in lower octaves and to be a foundation for the fiddle, bass, and guitar. But as a general rule, my playing is less rock-and-roll than before. Now I can play over the fiddle, which I couldn't do on the previous CDs."

Nicolas plays a textured, atmospheric hurdy-gurdy on *La Fille et les Dragons*, at the end of the album. "Traditionally, the instrument is used for its sharp, loud timbre, which facilitates dancing. But about 20 years ago, new instrument makers allowed other possibilities, which means that today we hear the hurdy-gurdy played in many contexts without recognising it."

If *Dans les Airs* is less of a rocker, this is compensated by more ambience, within which each musician finds his place. The arrival of Réjean Brunet, who replaces Benoit Bourque, transforms the band with-

out being too drastic a change. Member of La Volée d'Castors and Des Frères Brunet, the double-bassist, who also plays diatonic accordion and piano, comes from a folk background and is a long-time square dance player. "He adds different frequencies to our music. When he plays the stand-up bass, we have a solid foundation and we don't have to force ourselves as much. But when he plays accordion, he brings totally different colors," Nicolas praises. With La Volée, Réjean was designated as the group's bass player. "But he has talent in all three instruments and he's a great singer too. He's got his own style. Réjean has really added a lot to the new album."

Like their previous albums, *Dans les Airs* contains chansons à répondre, drinking and party songs, jazzy accents, improvisational moments, atmospheric piano playing, mouth-music or 'turlotte,' alert foot play, and a certain melancholy. The main difference lies in the arrangements of different instruments. Two pianos swing together at the end of one piece, bringing to mind Denis Fréchette and his work with La Bottine. Guest Pierre-Luc Dupuis brings his wacky chromatic harmonica playing to the mix. Michel Borgeleau, another special guest,

Tubthumping

plays the snare and Olivier, the violinist turned fiddler, has an earthier sound than ever before.

"I would imagine that's where I'm at," says Olivier, aka Olo. "In the last few years, I've participated in a lot of sessions, and that rubs off on you. Maybe in the future my sound will be even rawer. It takes a life to master an instrument. What satisfies a musician? Playing well? Playing with intention? Mixing well with an ensemble? I'm starting to put my foot in the right direction."

"In sessions, his bow is a little more violent, more ornamentation," flatters Nico. "Olo's classical years are farther away than ever now."

That leaves Simon Beaudry, the singer and guitar player with the pure voice, brother of Éric from La Bottine and carrier of a rich family repertoire from his native Saint-Côme. He replaced Bernard Simard just before they recorded *Les Amants du Saint-Laurent* and his contribution is more important on *Dans les Aïrs*. "He had been playing a lot, but had never made a CD. He has been with us longer than any other guitar player. After 300 concerts, he has matured a lot and his singing is a lot more open now," says Olo.

With all of that put together, *Dans les Aïrs*

is the recording of a mature group who never lacked maturity anyways! Le Vent blows more lightly, but it will blow for years to come. New inquest, belle outcome!

Get Up, Stand Up...

Michael Franti's ridiculously upbeat *Yell Fire!* brims with astute and succinct lyrics. One of the top-drawer albums released in 2006, it grew out of the carnage in the Middle East. Roddy Campbell gathers the impelling details.

Bedlam never looked so brilliant.

On stage at the recent Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Michael Franti and Spearhead made it up with their jubilant songs of peace, protest and puppets. And the natural amphitheatre that is Gallagher Park heaves in a sea of ecstatic humanity, grooving to this very charismatic man.

The dreadlocked Franti stands an imposing six feet, five inches tall in his often bare feet. And as his exhilarating set ends he leaps into the crowd to hug his fans. It's a warm, typical gesture. But then, his appearance at the Edmonton

Folk Music Festival is a homecoming of sorts. He spent a year in this city as a teenager – his only home outside of Oakland, CA. That year, he tells me prior to his performance, changed his life.

"I came here when I was 14 years old," says Franti. "To go to another country and to see how other people live a little bit differently, to see America from the outside, really shaped my social consciousness. America is a very myopic place. People in other countries know more about our foreign policy than we do as Americans. The simple reason being, it affects them more than it affects us. So it really shaped me."

In case you spent the past 12 months with The Little Prince on Asteroid 325, Franti's 2006 release, *Yell Fire!*, made numerous album-of-the-year lists. A thoughtful, poignant condemnation of hunger, poverty and the ongoing atrocities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Israel, it's frequently hard hitting with fingers firmly pointed. And yet *Yell Fire!* is no exercise in brow beating. Rather it's a majestically upbeat and optimistic roots-rock-reggae recording.

Largely, it was inspired by Franti's extended fact-finding visit to various troubled spots

GORDIE TENTREES

Bottleneck to Wire



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Tubthumping

around the Middle East. As a longtime peace activist, he had grown frustrated with the nightly bias broadcast on network news stations so he took along a film crew and made *I Know I'm Not Alone: A Musician's Search For The Human Cost of War*.

"I was being lied to over and over again. [The news reports] kept taking about the economic cost of war, the political cost of war. Meanwhile, there are hundreds of thousands of people dying. I was sitting there watching this and I said, 'I can't believe this is happening in my lifetime.'

"I had read this book [*An Act of State*] about Martin Luther King, by William Pepper—a photo journalist. He had been to Vietnam and came back and had shown his photos to Martin Luther King. And Martin Luther King said, 'I can't be quiet about this anymore. I have seen these pictures. I have to speak out.' And I was very moved by that because one year from the day he started speaking out was the exact day he was assassinated. I thought to myself, 'Well, that means these pictures and his voice were striking a chord.' And so I wanted to go to [Iraq] for myself and see what was going on, and also to film it and bring it back for people."

Yell Fire! effortlessly merges folk, funk, reggae, rock and hip-hop. It reflects his eclectic musical tastes, which range from Johnny Cash to Run DMC. Rather, for Franti, the feel of a song takes priority along with its ability to make people dance and think. He's truly a remarkably profound lyricist. Cue the opening line of the title track:

A revolution never comes with a warning/A revolution never sends you an omen/A revolution arrives just like the morning...

How absolutely succinct and brilliant!

"People like myself and Ani DiFranco, Billy Bragg, Ben Harper, we've talked about issues our whole careers. I believe that is part of a musician's role, to make something that others can easily understand, something that is inviting to others, the experience of being in an engaging role. That's what we do. We try to make the music be fun, be emotional, be spiritual. But at the end of the day, we don't want to leave people going away feeling, 'Oh, I just heard a bunch of angry speeches about how fucked up [President George W.] Bush

is.' Anybody can do that. You want to leave people feeling inspired to change things."

Michael Franti was born April 21, 1966, in Oakland, CA. He and his brother were adopted in infancy by a white family. His surrogate mother was a teacher who transferred to Highlands Junior High in Edmonton in 1980. The whole family was devoutly religious, attending church every Sunday and studying the Bible through the week. Yet despite his upbringing, Franti does not consider himself religious. As he sings in *East To The West*: "God is too big for just one religion."

"I pray. I practice yoga every day and I meditate but I don't practice one set of religion. But I try and let my mind and my heart open to learning from all of them."

"My parents weren't outwardly political but they shared the same ideals that I do: tolerance of other people. [Religion] is like anything else, if you practice what it is you're talking about we find that place that is the true essence of being human."

In 1986, Franti took his first tentative musical steps with the industrial punk pundits The Beatnigs. They released a self-title album and an EP, *Television*, on Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles label. Within five years, however, he had moved on to The

Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy. They would open for U2 on their Zoo TV Tour and accompany novelist William Burroughs on the spoken-word album *Spare Ass Annie And Other Tales*.

Franti founded Spearhead in 1994. And now after 10 albums, *Yell Fire!* is unquestionably their most universally accepted. It didn't hurt having guests like pop diva Pink and crack Jamaican bass and drums duo Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare share their significant talents. "Working with Sly and Robbie was like going to university—getting your masters degree in music," says Franti, chuckling. Whatever, it all adds up to a significant and deserved breakthrough.

"*Yell Fire!* has taken us to places we've never been before, musically. It's also brought us to new audiences. I feel incredibly grateful to be here today performing at a folk festival. I'm not really a traditional folk band but I feel we play music that is for people. I don't know if music can change the world overnight but I know it can help us make it through a difficult night. What I've always loved about traditional music is that idea of sitting on the porch singing the songs that are helping you get through today and into tomorrow."



Photo courtesy: Frank Gasparie & the E.F.M.F.

Raggle



James King / Paul Dwyer

Taggle Gypsies

Controversial and brash, outspoken Eugene Hütz has taken Gogol Bordello – a nine-piece ragbag of international Gypsy punks – to world acclaim largely on the strength of their manic live gigs and new, dutifully frenzied disc, *Super Taranta!* To think that little over a year ago they played pub gigs in Saskatoon. Roddy Campbell brushes up on his Romany.

Tarantism: *n.* A nervous condition characterized by an uncontrollable impulse to dance.

Gogol Bordello deserve a health warning, obviously. Master practitioners of pandemonium on dance floors from Aspen to Zeranin, these self-described Gypsy punks appear prepped for global ascendancy.

Performing with Madonna at *Live Earth* in London, in front of an estimated international audience of two billion, certainly didn't hold them back.

"She learned Romany – the language of the Gypsies – to sing with us," says Gogol Bordello's frontman extraordinaire, Eugene Hütz. "We put two songs together [the traditional Romany], *Lela Pala Tute* with her *La Isla Bonita*. It fit together like a glove. That is a fuckin' hit! A fuckin' hit! My cellphone never stopped ringing for two weeks. I had calls from Canada, Ukraine, everywhere. It was amazing the people who saw that show on television. They were like, 'Hey man, you got Madonna to sing in Gypsy. That's crazy'."

This interview began on a bus somewhere in France and ended in the heart of Los Angeles. A hard band to pin down these days, this nine-piece, New York City-based Gogol Bordello. All summer long, they've attracted massive attention for their theatrical, rabble-rousing appearances at such major festivals as Glastonbury (U.K.), Bonnaroo (U.S.) and Coachella (U.S.).

Their new disc, the aptly titled *Super Taranta!*, has also done the business; garnishing fawning reviews from both mainstream media as well as the music trades. It's a typical, gloriously frenzied affair, equal parts humorous and pensive. Set amidst literate tales of sex, debauchery and immigrant alienation, which are all slapped on a furious foundation of Gypsy chants, fiddle

and accordion, *Super Taranta!* veers madly into punk, reggae and even metal. It's music that Hütz (pronounced Hoots) describes as "new rebel intelligence."

"My whole idea [from the start] was to make Gypsy music a part of subculture, to bring it to kids, or into punk rock and reggae, and to other forms of music that come from social unrest – because that's very inspirational music."

"It's a folkloric way of making music. Gypsies take local music and make it their own – flamenco from Spain, guitar ballads from Russia. Gogol Bordello take extreme sounds of Eastern Europe, that being Gypsy, and the most extreme sounds of the West – the rock 'n' roll tradition."

Inevitably, their swashbuckling approach to Gypsy music draws comparisons to The Pogues, who adopted a similar attitude towards traditional Irish music. And like The Pogues, Gogol Bordello have a charismatic singer and songwriter in Hütz. With a singing voice laced with a heavy East European accent, references to Borat are frequent and not entirely amiss. Whatever, Hütz, with his magnificent moustache and total disregard for convention, is clearly the mastermind behind Gogol Bordello.

Furthermore, he also enjoys a burgeoning film career. He starred alongside Elijah Wood in *Everything Is Illuminated*, has a leading role in the upcoming Madonna-directed short film *Filth And Wisdom*, and is the primary focus of Czech filmmaker Pavla Fleishcer's documentary *The Pied Piper of Hützovina*. Fleishcer filmed Hütz throughout the summer of 2004 as he travelled in Ukraine, rediscovering his roots.

Born in Kyev in 1972, he fled Ukraine with his family in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986 and ended up in refugee camps in Poland, Hungary, Austria and Italy before being resettled to Burlington, VT, in 1992. Six years later, Hütz relocated to New York City, "to find some real rebel action." And once there, he set about recruiting for what evolved into the multi-ethnic Gogol Bordello.

Currently, their lineup includes two Russians (Sergey Ryabtsev, fiddle, and Yuri Lemeshev, accordion), an Ethiopian (Thomas Gobena, bass), an Ecuadorian (MC Pedro Erazo, beats), an Israeli (Oren Kaplan, guitar), an American (Eliot Ferguson, drums), a Chinese-Scott (Elizabeth Sun, percussion and dance) and a Thai-American (Pamela Jintana Racine, percus-

sion, dance). And no, U. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, does not negotiate their spats.

"It took a lot of years to put together Gogol Bordello. People came and went. We've added two more players in the last two years [Gobena and Erazo]. If somebody thinks they are joining this band for their egos, for sex, whatever, and add nothing, they don't last 20 minutes. Not 20 fucking minutes! But the musicians we have, everybody has a very distinct personal style. Amazing musicians, you know."

"I write the songs. Even throughout the '90s when everybody was getting into techno, I was writing songs. Nic Cave, Tom Waits and Shane MacGowan those are my heroes – great songwriters, no bullshit clichés. But it is important my songs stand up. I must play them, just me and my guitar, down in the subway, out on the street, wherever. Then I take them to the group. And there they become completely something else. Everybody contributes, yeah, like a co-operative."

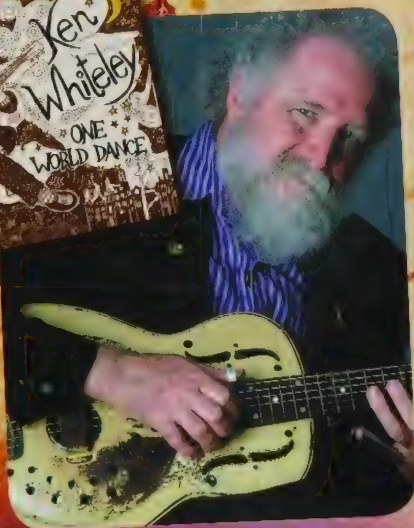
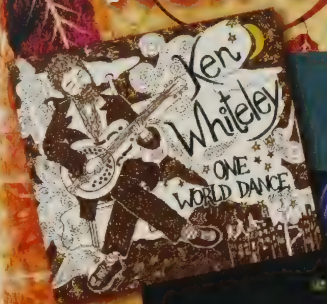
Back in Kyev, Hütz discovered punk initially and bought bootleg recordings on the black market of The Sex Pistols, The Dead Kennedys and, of course, The Clash, with money he made from pirating pornography. "[The Clash's] *Know Your Rights*, it's like the best song I ever heard." From a more eclectic standpoint, though, the Paris-based combo Mano Negra, led by Manu Chau, also made a huge impact on young master Hütz. "Manu's approach was so eclectic. It just basically had no fucking style. When I first heard it I was like, 'What the fuck is this?' He had a certain esthetic, intelligent messages with an unpredict-



The best moustache on the roots scene

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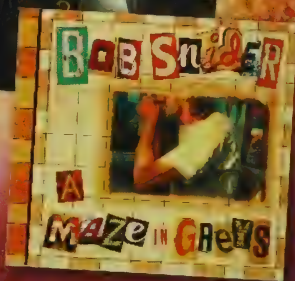
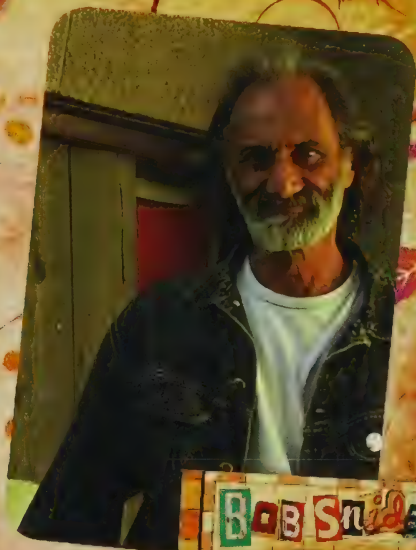


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able juxtaposition of styles.

"Manu, man, he's like Joe Strummer. Joe Strummer was never the cliché of a rock star. He stood up for his beliefs and Manu is very much like him. Joe was 10 years older than Manu and Manu is 10 years older than me. It's always a challenge and a pleasure to play with him."

Forewarned by the BBC Radio World Service of the impending dangers associated with the disaster at Chernobyl, Hütz and his family fled Kyev to stay with relatives. In the Carpathian Mountains he discovered his grandmother was a Gypsy. That realization was clearly a turning point in his life.

"The Gypsy aspect brings you straight to the intersection of art and human rights. All music and art that always interested me had that element of reaching out through borders. Gypsy music's about channelling energy, and expressing it and sharing it."

In recent years, Hütz, Gogol Bordello guitarist Oren Kaplan and seven-string Russian Gypsy guitarist Vadim Kolpakov have worked on community music for young Gypsies in camps in Ukraine. Kolpakov is the nephew of iconic seven-string Gypsy guitarist Sasha Kolpakov, the 20-year star of Moscow's Romen Theatre – the only Gypsy theatre in the world. This trio combines traditional songs and hip-hop and focuses on delivering educational messages to kids in Romania. They include instructions on how to protect themselves from police brutality. Hütz also toured with Sasha Kolpakov and considers it one of the highlights of his career. "It's such an honour for a musician to become a bandmate of your hero."

Our conversation unavoidably turns to the Gipsy Kings. The French seven-piece made up of two sets of brothers – Nicolas, Paul, Canut, Patchai and Andre Reyes along with Diego and Paco Baliardo – have a significant following in North America. And Hütz, surprisingly enough, is a supporter, despite their occasional dodgy cover such as *I've Got No Strings* or *Hotel California*. The latter they recorded for the soundtrack of the Coen Brothers film *The Big Lebowski*.

"They probably had a good laugh recording that," says Hütz. "I'll tell you a story. I was on my way to a big Gypsy festival in France with my girlfriend. I stopped at a bar beside the road for a drink, in the middle of nowhere. Inside, there were these musicians playing without a microphone or anything. Just their guitars. They were fucking unbelievable. That was probably the most amazing performance I have ever seen in my life. That was the Gipsy Kings.

"Their father was a famous Gypsy guitarist [Jose Reyes, who sang with guitarist Manitas de Plata]. Picasso, Salvador Dali and Charlie Chaplin used to go visit him."

Other more traditional Gypsy musicians Hütz considers an inspiration include the wonderful Romanian ensemble Taraf De Haidouks (*Band of Outlaws*). But at this point of the interview he takes a serious wobbler, cursing the U.K. world music magazine *Songlines* for its recent headline: "Gogol Bordello – what the f***!?: Gypsy punks taking their music to a wider audience, or rock pretenders taking the piss?"

The polite part of his outburst went something like: "Those bastards in England think I don't take Gypsy music serious. Fucking music snobs! Fuck them." You can certainly understand his anger. The *Songlines* article is a tawdry and mute debate offering pros and cons of whether Gogol Bordello are world music. Who cares? The Pogues went through similar silly arguments almost 25 years ago.

What brought about Hütz's outburst, though, was mention of Gogol Bordello recently winning a coveted BBC Radio 3 Award for World Music in the Americas category. Yet he bristles at the term "world music."

"How ironic," he says, "winning a 'world music' award. When I heard we had won I didn't really care. But it was the BBC. I have total respect for the BBC for what they have done for me in my personal life and my music. They have given much support to Gogol Bordello. My family always listened to the BBC world news in Europe,

even through the static."

But, to the world music controversy, Hütz feels it's a musical ghetto for bands like Gogol Bordello, Asian Dub Foundation and Balkan Beat Box. As Hütz told *Alternative Press* (Issue 208): "In America, the term 'world music' is totally nauseating. I don't know who the fuck made that term, but fuck that guy ... Our debut [*Voi-La Intruder*] ended up in the world music section.

"Being pretty adventurous, I've always looked in that section and found many great things there that should not be there, like Café Tacuba and Molotov. At the time, I was so sick of the state of American rock, I thought it was refreshing to be in there. But now, after learning how racist so-called world music is marketed, I fucking hate it, and I'm glad we're out of there. It isolates bands from potential listeners; people just don't wander around to that section. It's retarded." [*For the totally opposite perspective, see the P.E. Joe Boyd interview in issue No. 34 – The Ed*]

Indeed, Gogol Bordello no longer loiter with intent on world music shelves at HMV, or any other record store. Their popularity was built through hard work and outrageous high-energy performances. To think, little over a year ago they were playing gigs like Louis's Pub in Saskatoon, SK.

"I'll tell you, man, what it's about is having to do it when you don't feel like it. You have to be able to drag yourself on stage when you really don't want to. I drag myself on stage and within five minutes I am going. There's no feeling like it."



Arlo Guthrie

The Penguin Eggs Interview



Arlo Guthrie grew up surrounded by such legendary American folk figures as Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston and Ramblin' Jack Elliott. The eldest son of Woody Guthrie, young Arlo had no intention in following in his father's footsteps. He wanted to become a forrest ranger. All that changed on Thanksgiving Day, 1965. Arrested, charged and convicted for littering, he turned this escapade into an hilarious twenty-minute talking blues, *Alice's Restaurant Massacre*. Previewed at the Newport Folk Festival in 1967 – 40 years ago this past summer – and released as an album, it catapulted him to fame. Woody would die in October of the same year of Huntington Chorea – a rare inherited neurological disorder. Arlo has lived with the threat of it all his life. Nevertheless, he has enjoyed commercial success with a cover of Steve Goodman's City of

New Orleans and recorded numerous solo albums as well as several with Pete Seeger and the extended Guthrie clan. His latest release, *In Times Like These*, offers something completely different: a live recording backed by the University of Kentucky Symphony Orchestra. Questions by Roddy Campbell.

Why record with an orchestra?

I think what it affords me is an opportunity to change what I'm doing. I thought it would be challenging to bring together a more structured form. There was a great English actor on TV and somebody was asking him how he kept material fresh? He said, "Anybody who's been doing this for a while can do a good show but unless you're willing to risk doing a bad show, you'll never do a great show." I thought, 'There's a lot

of truth to that'. This is uncomfortable enough for me, this is a risk I'm willing to take. The emotional impact of a symphony orchestra live is not something you can duplicate on a synthesizer. You can't do it with your fiddle and your banjo and your mandolin. This is a different and a personal challenge.

Yet the title track is just you and the guitar?

I had written it so recently. I hadn't had a chance to send it off to [arranger] Jamie [Burton] to orchestrate. The show was obviously longer than the recording. I had a lot more time to play with the audience, do some humour and things like that during the live event. As a matter of fact, it was the 40th anniversary of *Alice's Restaurant* that night and I wanted to record it. That's actually available on iTunes as a separate project altogether. So, what I'm saying is there was more to the evening than reflected on the record. We wanted to make a record that you could listen to over and over again and not be tired of jokes and things like that.

I saw you on tour with your family last spring. Clearly there's still an enjoyment playing your father's songs. For you, what is his greatest legacy?

I think the most important thing that he espoused was the idea that people should take pride in who they are, that it's better to fail at being yourself than to succeed at being somebody else. He really believed people would be happier if they could believe in themselves as individuals. I can't think of a more appropriate, important theme for these days, where people are scared to be themselves, people are ashamed to be themselves, people are afraid – whatever the story is. We're being told that we don't look right, we don't fit right, we're not smart enough or thin enough or whatever to be valuable. He really

believed that everybody had a unique and individual value.

Do you have a particular fond memory of your father?

I think the fondest memories are when, sometime during the early '60s, his songs were getting sung all over the world. They'd be translated into all these languages, and people would record them on these LPs, and we would always get copies of them. Every weekend we'd bring my dad back to the house and I would play him all of these songs, from every continent, in every language you can possibly imagine, and we'd get such a kick out of it. We'd be just sitting there eating hotdogs and listening to what people had done with his songs. It was so great to see him derive some satisfaction from knowing that the work he did counted for so much for so many people.

The weekend musical sessions on Coney Island, when you were a kid, are legendary? What do you remember about them?

There was a family called the Gleasons. [Bob and Sidel Gleason] had a little apartment near where my dad was in the hospital. We used to go to visit the Gleasons and we'd bring my dad over from the hospital. He could sit down, relax, smoke his smokes, whatever he wanted to do without anybody looking over his shoulder. Then people who'd heard he was there wanted to come over and sing a few songs. It turned into a nice way, in a time, when it was difficult for him to communicate. My mom thought it would be important for people to communicate with each other and let him extract from that what he thought was valuable. He would get the news of what's going on from people talking and playing with each other. That was a much less intrusive way for him to participate in our lives. So I do remember that.

Give me a sense of what it has been like living with the threat of Huntington's disease?

I was never that concerned about it. I remember when the research had brought about the test, you could see if

you had the gene or not. I thought, well, 'OK, what does this mean?' What if they had a test for getting hit by a truck or a test of the likelihood of getting bitten by a shark or a brick falling on you, where would you stop testing and start living? If you're not going to go down that road all the way, why begin it? So I never bothered. What if my grandmother had taken the test and said, 'Oh no, I've got Huntington's disease. I don't know if I should keep Woody Guthrie or not.' What kind of world would this be? Certainly I wouldn't have been here if the decision had gone the other way and nor would he have been. At some point you realize whatever you got or don't got, you're a value to the world. It's about what you're willing to contribute when you're able. So I thought, 'OK, I'm just going to do what I can for as long as I got and that will be the end of it.'

There's been lots written about the first time Bob Dylan showed up at your parents' house, what do you remember about it?

I had to be 13, I had a younger brother and sister. There was a girl there whose job it was to look after them because I was too young. She answered the door and I remember as soon as the door was open I came over in that direction to see what was up and there was this guy standing there. I liked him because he

had strange work boots or something and I thought this is an interesting guy. I invited him in much to her annoyance. She didn't really want to invite some character in. He came in and sat down on these little couches we had in the living room and he was saying he wanted to know where my dad was. I told him he was down the road in the hospital in those days. We played harmonicas together for half an hour or so and then he took off and went to see my dad.

Was it hard starting out being the son of Woody Guthrie?

No, I had fun. I would get to go to all of these clubs in New York. I was totally underage but they would let me in because my dad's buddies were playing. So I could go hear guys like Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. I could go hear Cisco [Houston] until he passed away. Of course, Ramblin' Jack would come to town and I'd want to hang out with him. I loved that.

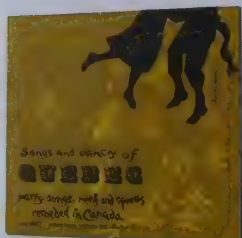
Who influenced you the most?

Different people: Mississippi John Hurt, Elizabeth Cotton for that kind of finger picking. Doc Watson for that kind of flat picking and Leadbelly for playing the 12-string guitar. Obviously Pete Seeger for playing the banjo and also the 12-string. His charisma with the audience, his timing and his sensibility, I think I've probably learned more from

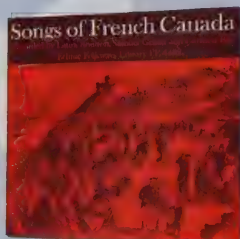


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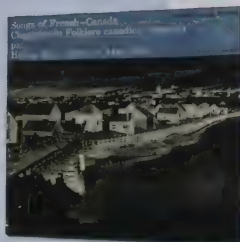
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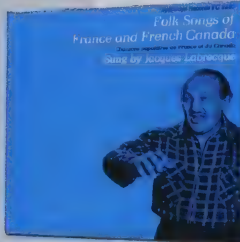
SONGS OF FRENCH CANADA, Various Artists



SONGS OF FRENCH CANADA, Hélène Baillargeon & Alan Mills



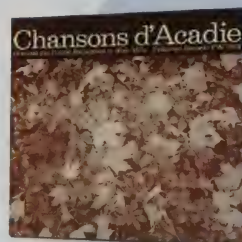
FRENCH CANADIAN COUNTRY DANCES, Aimé Cagné



FOLK SONGS OF FRENCH CANADA, Jacques Labrecque



VOIX DE 8 POÈTES DU CANADA, Various Artists



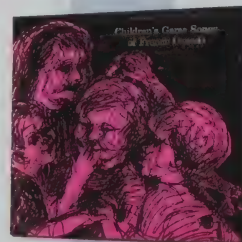
CHANSONS D'ACADIE (FOLK SONGS OF ACADIA), Hélène Baillargeon



FRENCH FOLK SONGS FOR CHILDREN IN ENGLISH, Alan Mills



FRENCH FOLK SONGS FOR CHILDREN, Alan Mills



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Tubthumping

him than from anybody else.

How important was *Alice's Restaurant*?

I think it was important in the sense that it certainly put me in the position where I could make a living being a singer, which was never really an ambition of mine to begin with. I wanted to be a forest ranger. I had no interest in playing in public. I didn't want to be a performer. I wanted to be a musician just sitting around playing with some friends. So I went to school to study forestry [in Montana]. Unfortunately, it didn't work out for me. I wanted to be a forest ranger because I didn't like being around crowds of people. I thought I'd be much happier by myself out in the woods somewhere waiting for fires or something like that. So this life has been a total disaster.

Newport Folk Festival in 1967 was a turning point for you, yes?

That was, yeah. I went there as a regular person and I came out as Arlo Guthrie the entertainer person. I've had to be that person ever since. That was a total catastrophe.

You previewed *Alice's Restaurant* there didn't you?

I remember 40 years ago this year in July, it was my birthday, so I would have been 20. Newport in those days was in July. I think it was from the 10th to 16th and so I went there with a guitar, like everybody else. I wasn't a performer or anything; I was just bringing a guitar because we used to sit around playing with each other. Somebody suggested that I perform a song out on a little satellite stage. It was like a four-foot-square, 12-inch-high piece of wood. There were probably a couple of people around and somebody said, 'This kid's alright. Let's get him to do a bigger show,' make me part of the festival. They stuck me on an eight-foot-square, 12-inch-high box on another satellite stage. I was going to the big time. That had a few thousand people around it and somebody else said, 'We got to get this kid to close the festival. Put him on the main stage.' They invited me to do that. Somebody came up with the idea that at the end of *Alice's Restaurant* where

"I wanted to be a forest ranger because I didn't like being around crowds of people. I thought I'd be much happier by myself out in the woods somewhere waiting for fires or something like that. So this life has been a total disaster." – Arlo Guthrie

it says if one person does it they would send out one person – Joan Baez or Judy Collins and then two people do it and then we'll send out two more people, three people do it or 50 people they would send out the whole cluster and so that was the end of my life.

That must have been thrilling?

I don't even think I knew it was going on. I was just playing my songs, surprised that anybody wanted to hear them. I walked away from that thinking that was fun! The next morning there was an article in the *New York Times* talking about it and mentioning me and I thought, 'Wow, look at that – *New York Times*.' That was the end of my life.

What about your appearance at Woodstock?

That was about the same but on a larger scale. I was supposed to play on the second day. I got there on the first day because I just wanted to hang out and somebody said, 'Arlo, you've got to play now.' I said, 'No, I'm not playing until tomorrow.' They said, 'No you've got to play now.' I was in no condition

to play at that time. I was too young to realize that I could have said no. They said the other bands couldn't get in and it was a catastrophe. 'Richie [Havens] just spent a couple of hours up there and we couldn't ask anymore of him. We got to get somebody else and you're the only one so you've got to play now.' I thought, 'OK.' So I grabbed my guitar and went out there and sang for about an hour and a half. That's all I remember.

How did you end up working with Pete Seeger?

I can't really remember. I guess Harold Leventhal – he was Pete's manager and mine also – suggested that I join Pete. I got to, actually be close to him and watch him as he would move the audience from one song to the next and create a spirit not easily heard on recordings. You really had to have been there to capture the heart and soul of what was going on. The songs were just a vehicle. This is about something else that's about the heart of the man and the spirit of being a human being that these people were all sharing. Pete was able to rouse that spirit and to give it voice with people singing together. People, who



Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Arlo Guthrie and Richie Havens

would not have been seen necessarily even talking to each other outside of the theatre, would find themselves singing together inside. That was the magic that interested me.

How did you come across Steve Goodman's *City of New Orleans*?

I was playing at a little club called the Quiet Knight in Chicago, probably around 1969 or '70. The owner had just closed up, kicked everybody out, and I was walking out the door. It had to be two or three in the morning. There was a little guy standing there. He said, 'Arlo, I want to sing you a song.' I said, 'Come on, man, I don't want to hear no songs. I hate songs.' I was just tired. I wanted to go home. I didn't want to be bothered by some little guy. He said, 'Arlo, I just want to sing you one song.' He seemed like a nice guy and I said, 'I'll tell you what, buy me a beer and I'll sit here and drink it. As long as it lasts you can do whatever you want.' He said, 'That sounds like a good deal.' I said, 'It does?' It turned out to be Steve Goodman. He turned out to be singing the *City of New Orleans* and we became friends and talked for a little while. He gave me a cassette tape and a lead sheet.

I took it home and it sat on my piano for about six months or a year.

Then we were making a record in 1970, it came out in '71, and I said, 'Let's try this song'. We tried it with a rock band and then we tried it in country style, bluegrass. I think we re-cut that song seven times. Finally we said let's just give it one more shot and just keep it real simple. So we re-cut it and that's the version we ended up liking, although none of us expected it would ever get any airplay. After the record had come out, a radio station in Atlanta started playing it. Other stations in the south were picking it up so I was calling Warners. They said, 'Arlo, it's the *City of New Orleans*; its not Top 40.'

You were one of the first to raise money for the victims of hurricane Katrina.

We had watched the disaster unfold and we'd sent money into the Red Cross. And I wondered, 'Well, what good is that going to do? Who knows where it's going.' And then I had the idea of taking that train, The City of New Orleans, from Chicago down to the Gulf and doing a bunch of fundraisers along the way to raise money for the musicians.

We took that train; we raised over a hundred thousand dollars. It's not a fortune but for one family it's not bad. We brought in a lot of instruments. I think 50 pianos, things like that. We ended up doing the first show in New Orleans. Other people had done fundraisers but not in New Orleans. To see all of those faces in a jam-packed club that night with me, Willie Nelson and our kids playing together; to see New Orleans come alive again, even for one night, was well worth whatever effort we had to make.

What did you make of the Wilco and Billy Bragg *Mermaid Avenue* records?

I liked the first one a lot and I didn't like the second one as much. But I thought it was pretty good.

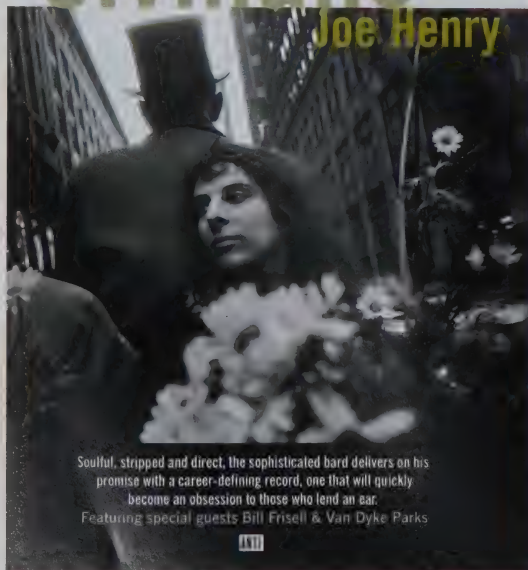
So what plans have you for the future?

Just looking forward to a future. I've got a bunch of new songs I'm trying to record. I haven't put out a record of new songs in about a dozen years. I haven't put out a real record record in a while, so we've got our work cut out for us.

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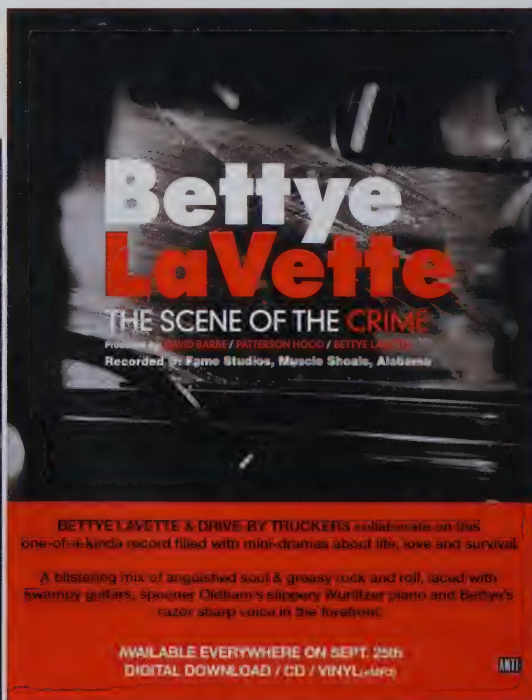
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Joe Henry



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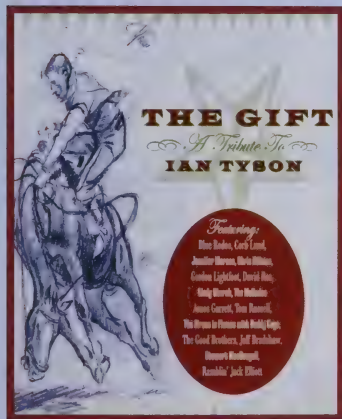
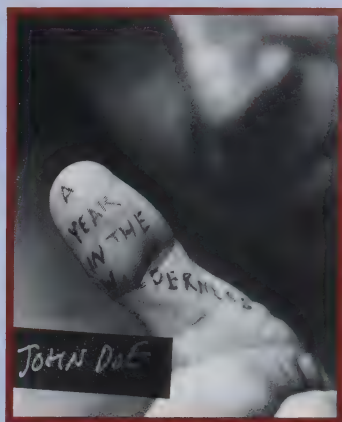
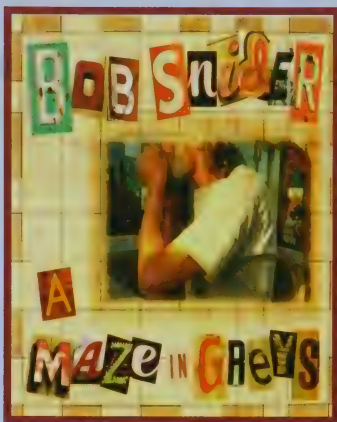
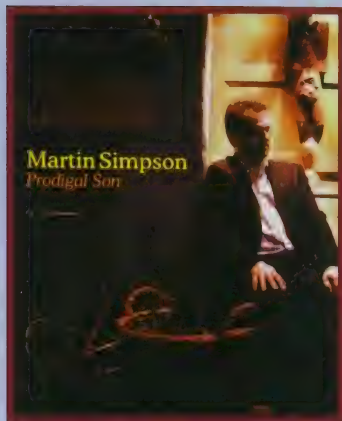
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ON TOP OF THE HILL



Billy Joe Shaver "Story Teller"

Billy Joe Shaver and his late son, **Eddy Shaver**, made this acoustic recording in January of 1992, here, with just a trio of acoustic guitars, Shaver gives us his classic, enduring songs interspersed with hilarious stories about his life and how some of these songs were written, offering a glimpse into the heart of the storyteller in a personal one-on-one performance ... small, intimate and live.



Red Stick Ramblers "Made In The Shade"

The **Red Stick Ramblers** a five-piece band based in Lafayette, Louisiana spin Western Swing, 20s & 30s era jazz, and traditional Cajun stylings to create an addictive sound all their own on Sugar Hill Records debut *Made In The Shade*.



Sam Bush "On The Road" DVD

Sam Bush is a consummate performer and is best consumed live! He is energy personified and while his studio records provide a solid representation of Sam's diverse musical influences, it is his live shows that keep fans coming back for more - *On The Road* was recorded LIVE in the Big Room at the Sierra Nevada Brewery on August 30, 2006 - it also features bonus material ("The River's Gonna Run" video featuring Emmylou Harris and Buddy Miller) and live interview segments with Sam discussing his band, songs and instruments.



Var. Artists "Absolutely Bluegrass"

Absolutely Bluegrass Vol. 1 is a pretty nifty collection that features some of the genre's brightest talents, both new and old. Progressive, contemporary, traditional and crossover offerings from Dolly Parton • Nickel Creek • Ricky Skaggs • Yonder Mountain

String Band • Sam Bush • Alison Krauss and The Duhks help keep this modern bluegrass anthology and Sugar Hill sampler nestled deep in the listener's favor.



Seldom Scene "SCENEchronized"

One of the most innovative bluegrass bands of all time, **Seldom Scene** created an urban audience for the genre by breaking the "bluegrass rules" of the time. By retrofitting songs from outside the genre by writers such as Bob Dylan, Robert Johnson, JJ Cale and Jonathan Edwards, the Scene presented bluegrass that younger, hipper audiences could relate to. The Scene's original fans are still loyal while the band continues to introduce bluegrass to young, vital audiences. *SCENEchronized* continues the Seldom Scene tradition including covers by Merle Haggard, Bob Dylan, Steve Earle and John Fogerty, presented with the Scene's incredible vocal harmonies and solid instrumental performances.



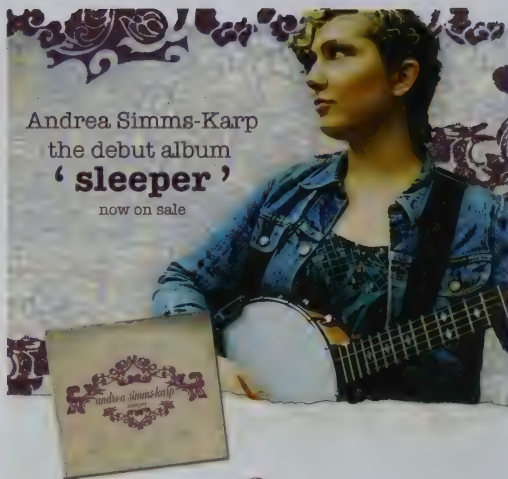
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Recordings



Photo courtesy: Eric Kozakiewicz & the E.F.M.F.

Martin Simpson Prodigal Son

Compass/Topic

Herein lies the bedrock on which Martin Simpson has built his colossal reputation as a distinctive and supremely talented interpreter of British and American folk songs.

Prodigal Son draws from that same well but not since the glorious double-barrelled blast of *Grinning in Your Face* (1983) and *Sad Or High Kicking* (1985), has a Simpson recording ran end to end without a critical grumble. This latest release is as imposing and masterful a recording as he has ever made.

An outrageously talented acoustic guitar player, he recruited the likes of Jackson Browne, Danny Thompson, Alistair Anderson, Andy Cutting and Kate Rusby to deal with the finer details. Essentially, though, it's simply Simpson—cool, calm and, yes, grinning in your face.

Prodigal Son largely features big, gorgeously executed, traditional ballads the likes of *Batchelor's Hall*, *Granmore Hare*, an epic nine-minute *Andrew Lammie* and a total lyrical reworking of the evergreen *Little*

Musgrave (credited partially to Nic Jones). It also includes two clawhammer banjo tracks—the sprightly instrumental *Pretty Crowing Chicken*, and a nod to Ry Cooder, *Good Morning Mr. Railroad Man*—an appropriately menacing *Duncan & Brady*, and a timely reworking of Randy Newman's *Louisiana 1927*.

But what sets this recording apart from Simpson's past endeavours is the economy of his prodigious playing. There's an increased subtlety and gentle confidence abroad here that arises from the breathing space now permitted in his picking. It really adds so much more emotion to his guitar mastery. Possibly it's his recent state of fatherhood, but the same can be said of Simpson's singing. The desperate intensity of the past has now been replaced with a more casual warmth. Moreover, he has turned into an exceptional songwriter, with *Never Any Good*—a tender but brutally honest biographical tribute to his father—surely the bookies favourite for song of the year. Add it all up and *Prodigal Son* amounts to an album of incomparable elegance and demonstrative flair.

—By Roddy Campbell

Kris Drever

Black Water

Compass

This album came out in the U.K. more than a year ago now, promptly received rave reviews and walked off with the Horizon Award at the BBC 2007 Folk Awards.

I remember at the time downloading a couple of the tracks from Emusic and being smacked senseless by the first song that I heard—*Poor Man's Son*, a heartbreaking country ballad with a profoundly humanist perspective on poverty and crime.

Well since then *Black Water* has been in seemingly endless rotation at my house, and now the fine folks at Compass have picked it up for release here in North America.

Unlike Drever's work with Lau, *Black Water's* emphasis is squarely on songs rather than tunes. While he does turn in a couple of very nice sets of tunes it's the songs that will take your breath away, particularly Drever's voice, a distinctive thick burr. He shines particularly on two originals from Sandy Wright and Andy McKay's aforementioned *Poor Man's Son*, but there's plenty of traditional gems, including the sombre *Fause Fause* and the far-from-throwaway bonus track, *Farewell to Fuinergy*.

The production is also a treat, courtesy of He-Who-Must-Always-Be-Named, Mr. John McCusker. Kate Rusby, Ian Carr, Donald Shaw and a host of others serve the drinks, but this party's really all Drever and McCusker. Simply stunning.

—By Richard Thornley

Lau

Lightweights And Gentlemen

Compass

These men are alchemists. Their raw material: the traditional folk music of the British Isles. Their alembic: the humble guitar, accordion, and fiddle. There are three members: Kris Drever, Martin Green, and Aidan O'Rourke. A list of their previous endeavors would be longer than the space accorded this review but suffice to say that list includes Daniel Lapp, Blazin' Fiddles, and pretty much everyone in between. *Lightweights And Gentlemen*, their group debut, reflects all that history and more, and is quite easily one of the best records you will hear this year. It opens with *Hinba*, original tunes that evolve from an ominous guitar and accordion pairing through untraceable twists and turns into a crashing, dischordant demise.



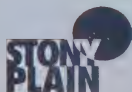
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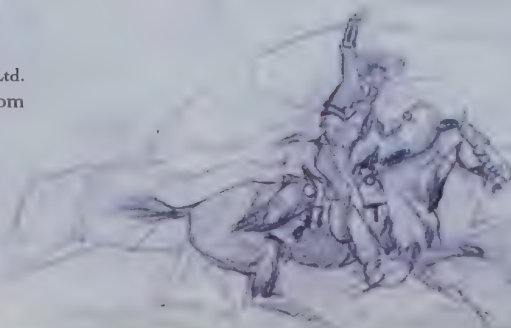
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| 1. Four Strong Winds ~ BLUE RODEO | 2. MC Horses ~ CORB LUND |
| 3. Blue Mountains of Mexico ~ JENNIFER WARNES | 4. What Does She See ~ CHRIS HILLMAN |
| 5. Red Velvet ~ GORDON LIGHTFOOT | 6. The Gift ~ DAVID REA |
| 8. Smuggler's Cove ~ THE MCDADES | 9. Some Kind Of Fool ~ AMOS GARRETT |
| 10. Old Cheyenne ~ TOM RUSSELL | 11. Someday Soon ~ THE CIRCUS IN FLAMES WITH BUDDY CAGE |
| 12. Will James ~ RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT | 13. You're Not Alone Anymore ~ STEWART MACDOUGALL |
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WARNER MUSIC
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Recordings

Butcher Boy, the song that follows, is similarly sinister, beautifully carried by Drever's great fug of a voice. *The Jigs* are closer to "the tradition", whatever that is these days, but even they bear touches of jazz and warmer Mediterranean climes, and have their own hidden u-turns. Other highlights include a stunning version of *Freeborn Man*, O'Rourke's languid *Gallowhill*, and the hyper-kinetic *Moorhens*. Throughout I am occasionally reminded of other transmuters of the tradition: Filippo Gambetta, Chris Wood, Andy Cutting, the Bellowhead crew, and others, but rarely has music this original moved body and soul so completely. Brilliant stuff.

—By Richard Thornley

Carolyn Mark

Nothing Is Free

Mint Records, Inc.

This critic has been a fan of Carolyn Mark's for awhile and has favourably reviewed a few of her discs in the pages of this magazine. Her off-kilter humour and witty way with a lyric are still in strong evidence on such tracks as *The 1 That Got Away (With It)*, *1 Thing*, or *Pictures At 5* but as she moves through this new disc there's a new airiness and space in her songs that provides ample room for them to breathe. She doesn't seem as concerned filling the spaces with a denseness as she did in the past. And it gives her sound a more rootsy feel, rather than a pop or rock edge. There's also a greater dreaminess and vulnerability in her vocals that works for these songs. The violin and clarinet from Diona Davies and Allison Russell of Po' Girl add to this overall rootsiness. If this is a new direction for her, I endorse it wholeheartedly. A lovely disc.

—By Barry Hammond.

Bob Brozman Orchestra

Lumiere

Riverboat

About 10 years ago, I went to see Elsinore, the one-man *Hamlet* conceived and directed by CSA approved theatre-media arts genius Robert Lepage. Despite abundant technical wizardry and the considerable talents of actor Peter Darling, the frenetic to-ing and fro-ing and flipping of personas left the lingering impression of bedroom farce rather than *The Bard*.

Which makes one wonder: a one-man *Hamlet* ... what's the point? In the Bob Brozman Orchestra, Bob plays with ... well, himself. L'orchestre, c'est Bob.



A polyglot of all things strung, with an illustrious reputation as a collaborator, on this occasion Brozman uses the magic of the overbuds to perform most of the many parts on *Lumiere* himself. Lest I suffer the slings and arrows of fellow resophonic konaheads like Steve Dawson and Doug Cox, I will say that *Lumiere* is a considerably more coherent achievement than *Elsinore*.

There are some lovely moments on the record — mostly where Brozman has exercised some constraint and limited himself to less than six instruments — and he really is convincing in a wide variety of roles/styles.

However, I confess to having been too aware of the man behind the curtain to lose myself completely in the illusion.

—By Gallagher Parkinson

Compadres

James Keelaghan and Oscar Lopez

Buddy Where You Been?

Independent

Ten years ago James Keelaghan and Oscar Lopez put the first *Compadres* recording together. I remember their gig at the Jack Singer Hall in Calgary. It was packed and it was electric. They were on to something special all musicians and audiences crave. And then, as quickly and surprisingly as it came, it went.

A decade is a long time. And for some, an attempt to catch lightning in a bottle twice is a dangerous thing. Then again, every release is a gamble.

So they ventured into a Calgary studio with producer Don Pennington and out pops *Buddy Where You Been?* Not only an apt title for a reunion but a great song on a great

CD. *Buddy Where You Been?* sparkles with life and energy and the two of them really do have something special. Oscar plays better than ever. It's not all flash and wonder as it once was when he burst upon an unsuspecting world.

And James, a better player than many people give him credit for, holds his own in the instrumentals and contributes a couple of Keelaghan gems: *Ring*, a wonderful use of metaphor, and *Gathering Storm*, a lovely lamentation on the passing of time and the changes in attitudes it brings.

The only minor pick I could find — and maybe it's just the producer in me coming out — is they do a wonderful duet on *Summer* but I think it would have soared to even greater heights if Oscar had sung his part in Spanish. All in all, a job very well done. Welcome back boys, where you been? We've been waitin' on ya.

—by les siemieniuk

Joe Henry

Civilians

ANTI

Almost immediately upon listening to this disc for the first time, I began to reminisce about the early days of Elvis Costello, before he married that piano player and set his sights on becoming the next Bacharach. At least we still have Joe Henry, I thought.

As the record label was too cheap to send the whole CD, I was relegated to the web to find the details on the disc. Joe does not choose lightly his collaborators. Low and behold, www.anti.com revealed musical luminaries on board such as Bill Frisell, Greg

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Carma 10th Anniversary

Recordings

Leisz, Van Dyke Parks, Loudon Wainwright III and David Piltch (because wherever something amazing happens on this planet there is usually a Canadian involved). And wouldn't you just know it, in the reprinted liner notes Joe gives thanks to Declan McManus for no particular reason, though we can easily suppose why.

Always meticulous and thought provoking, one would never expect anything out of the ordinary since the ordinary from Joe Henry is miles above the best of most others and can never really be nailed down. Save one piece of oddity. Joe has done his share of co-writing but he rarely includes co-writes on his own albums. *Civilians* includes a track that he penned with Rufus and Martha's dad, a longtime hero of Henry's. When it comes to bending one's own rules, there is none more likely to twist your arm than Loudon Wainwright III.

— By Chris Martin

Habib Koite and Bamada Afriki

Cumbancha

Habib Koite's recordings are noted for their dense but flowing guitar work, the seamless integration of traditional instruments such as the balafon and ngoni into the mix, the socially conscious lyrics, and Habib's own flexible and easy vocal delivery. It has been six years since he released his last studio recording. On his new disc *Afriki*, Koite delivers much the same sound as his previous albums. For the most part, there is not much new to distinguish it from its predecessors. Still, if you enjoyed *Baro* and *Ma Ya*, most likely *Afriki* will please you, too.

Standout tracks include *Massake*, which features virile unison singing from the band and enthusiastic energy, and *Nta Dima*, using a chorus of Malian hunting horns, an endangered instrument not widely used today. Upon hearing its wild, charming tones on this album, I'm hoping Koite can resurrect it into modern usage.

— By Lark Clark

Kane Welch Kaplin

Kane Welch Kaplin
Dead Reckoning Records

Now so much of a unit that it almost feels impossible to think of them as separate, Dead Reckoners Keiran Kane and Kevin Welch sound like they're practically finishing each other's musical thoughts on their latest release.

With Kevin's son, Lucas, on drums, and Fats Kaplin laying down subtle accompani-

ment — as well as adding in an instrumental — these songs shimmer with Appalachian trance, folk heart, blues feeling. The quartet rely less on immediate hooks and more on accumulation of musical and verbal detail, like a Raymond Carver novel — Kaplin's buzzing sitar on *I Wish I Had That Mandolin*, the way banjo and steel guitar intertwine on *Red Light Blinking*, Kevin Welch singing "you were lost, but now you're found" in a casual voice that carefully hides emotion on *Last Lost Highway*.

The controlled mask threatens to slip on *What Are They Doin' In Heaven Today* — Welch's voice wistful, meditative, Kaplin's steel interspersing sparse runs between slight, finger-picked guitar — but even then their blues is still of the guarded variety.

— By Tom Murray

Quartette Down At The Fair

Independent

They've been called Canada's female vocal supergroup and that title certainly applies to Sylvia Tyson, Cindy Church, Caitlin Hanford and Gwen Swick. Superbly produced by guitarist Colin Linden, and featuring a number of the country's finest musicians on the backing tracks, this is easily the best disc they've recorded. Count it among this critic's list as one of the best albums of the year. Every track is a finely crafted jewel. Linden's guitar weeps, rattles, wails or swings with the mood of each song and the arrangements and harmonies are gorgeous.

Register players like Luke Doucet, Stuart Duncan, Chris Whitley, Randall Coryell, Richard Bell, and Fats Kaplan and you get an idea of the talent here.

It's impossible to pick a favourite track.

Is it Cindy Church's soulful *Nothing Can Make The World Right Again*, Sylvia Tyson's gospel *Tell My Lord*, Caitlin Hanford's bluegrass *That's What You Always Say To My Heart*, or Gwen Swick's swinging title track? Maybe the grooving *Who's Foolin' Who*? Heck, just leave the whole damn album in heavy rotation. Perhaps the government should dispense with diplomats and send this disc abroad instead.

— By Barry Hammond

Old Blind Dogs Four On The Floor

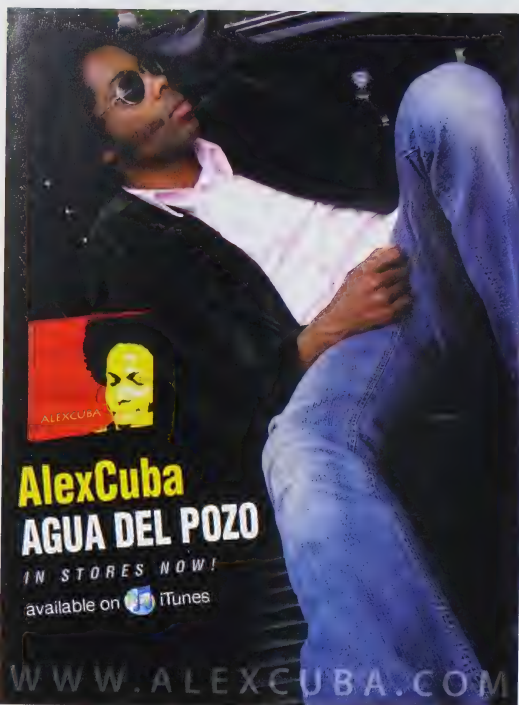
Compass

It's been four years since their last studio album, and in that time they've lost singer Jim Malcolm (oh, those honeyed tones) and founding member Buzzby McMillan (replaced by Aaron Jones).

Lesser bands might have called it a day, but not the Old Blind Dogs. Instead, they share the vocal duties among the remaining members, forge ahead with two 15th-anniversary concerts, and release one of their strongest records from the past decade. All of the familiar ingredients are here in *Four On The Floor*: strong ensemble singing and propulsive sets of tunes, with the occasional foray into the quieter backwaters of the Scottish soul. But there's growth also: a chamber feel to the strings on *Star O' The Bar*, some nicely subliminal effects on *Harris Dance*, and a waulking song that is dangerously (but so beautifully) suggestive of Capercaillie. They close out with three blistering live performances to show us that while they're getting older and perhaps can see the day when they might need bifocals, there's plenty of bite left in these dogs yet.

— By Richard Thornley






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Recordings

Andrea Simms-Karp

Sleeper
Independent

The debut album from Ottawa singer-songwriter Andrea Simms-Karp makes you feel like you're listening to the songs through a keyhole, not just because of her breathy voice but because the sound she and her band make together is soft and subdued enough to let her confessional lyrics and trilling self-harmonies take the foreground.

The best songs possess a shivery intimacy, underpinned by an unorthodox blend of instrumental effects produced by flute, guitar and synth. That said, it's hard to distinguish the best songs from the rest of the album, a situation Simms-Karp's vocal mannerisms and circumscribed banjo skills tend to compound.

— By Scott Lingley

Les Chauffeurs à Pieds

Au Studio Des Trois Lits

Scorbut Disques

This fifth disc from Les Chauffeurs is a bit of a retreat from the Quebecers' genre-bending earlier outings. For one thing, it's all tunes. Songs, particularly *chanson à répondre* and *complaintes* like *Complainte de Joseph Trépanier*, have been such highlights in this band's repertoire that to release a fully instrumental recording at first seems a little odd. For another, there's none of the outsider instrumentation or exotic arrangements that cropped up in the band's earlier days. There's a taste of Benoît Fortier's French horn, a banjo on *Buck-*

reel de Cascapédia, but nothing particularly out of the ordinary. That all said, the record succeeds completely in its goal of presenting the traditional music of Quebec in an intimate setting, in laying the music bare. Like Téada's (also all-instrumental) *Inné Amárach*, there's an artistry here that carefully balances individual expression and tradition, that equally rewards close listening and more physical responses to the music — dancing. So, while *Au Studio Des Trois Lits* is not quite what you might expect from Les Chauffeurs, it's very rewarding nonetheless.

— By Richard Thornley

Téada

Inné Amárach

Compass Records

Here's a beaut from Téada, their third album and their first all-instrumental outing.

The perfect marriage of tradition and art, you won't find the band "innovating" with electric guitars, didgeridoos, or the like. Instead we get sets of tunes played with flare, emotion and a masterful attention to sound and arrangement, the sound of a band that has truly come of age. Highlights for me are the pairing of bodhran and fiddle on *The Tenpenny Piece*, the gentle *Nóra Criona*, and the unaccompanied set of jigs that allows each player a chance to shine. And something else that raises *Inné Amárach* above the pack: its inclusion of a wide spectrum of tunes from the Irish tradition—planxties, jigs, hornpipes, polkas, slides—not just reels. The result is an album that dances and breathes good humour.

The accompanying DVD is hardly essential, but does make for an engaging half hour of television.

— By Richard Thornley

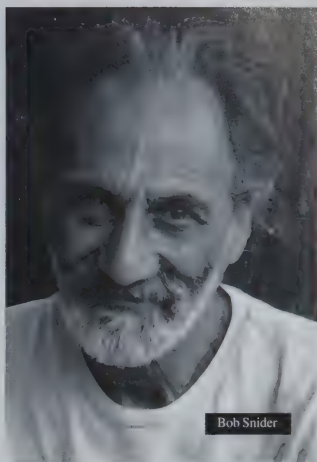
Bob Snider

A Maze in Greys

Borealis Records

"I come in and find you glum like a plum that's been left in the sunlight some, and you smile like a flag going up a pole."

So begins the new Bob Snider album — with a warm assurance that Toronto's beloved street-corner troubadour has not lost his whimsical outlook. Backed by an all-star band — including Bob Wiseman on keys, Chris Whiteley on guitars and drummer Michelle Josef — entirely in tune with his off-kilter poignancy, Snider waxes wise and whimsical on the ways of the human heart. Not everyone is going to have a high



Bob Snider

tolerance for Snider's voice, which suggests Deputy Dawg's Canadian cousin, but it's a perfect fit for lyrics like, "You might think I'm crazy as a loon up in a tree, but if you think you're as crazy as I am, you're crazier than me."

— By Scott Lingley

Various Artists

The Gift - A Tribute To Ian Tyson

Stony Plain Records

A Canadian legend, it's nice to see Ian Tyson's record company put out this tribute to his writing talents. Produced by Holger Petersen and Peter North (who does the liner notes), and featuring drawings by cowboy artist Charlie Russell, it's an attractive package with equally attractive music inside. Since Tyson's career has spanned forty years it's only natural that *The Gift* showcase both old and new. The old is represented by artists like Gordon Lightfoot, Amos Garrett, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, David Rea (who was Ian & Sylvia's first guitar player and whose surprisingly good weathered voice does a fine version of the title track) and Tom Russell. The new is represented by Corb Lund, The McDades (who contribute a soulful Celtic version of *Smuggler's Cove*), and Doug Andrew with his *The Circus In Flames*. Jennifer Warnes and Cindy Church add some gorgeous female vocals to the proceedings and, since it's a western record, there's also some great picking from the likes of Chris Hillman, Amos Garrett and Rick Whitelaw. To top it all off, Blue Rodeo contribute a sweet and solid version of the great *Four Strong Winds*. Nice one.

— By Barry Hammond



Andrea Simms-Karp

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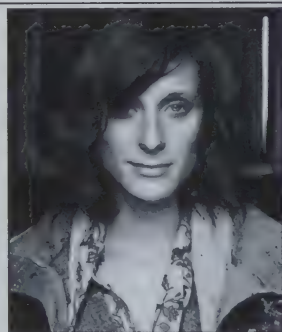


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Recordings

Various Artists

Beautiful Dreamers Vol. 1, Alberta Sessions Indelible Music

How do you review a 19-song compilation without leaving someone's feelings hurt by not including them? It helps to be a callous bastard, I suppose. Whatever, here's a rundown of some of the participants.

Ian Tyson, *Tom Blasingame*: Tyson always hits the mark. Appropriate to start off with the man most songwriters, Albertan or otherwise, aspire to be. Steve Pineo with Jane Hawley, *Too Bad For Me*: this song has such a familiar feel you'd swear it's a cover of '70s-era Lightfoot. Clea Roddick, *Happiness Is Not For Sale*: written by Ann Loree, this one in the proper promotional hands could rival Jann Arden's success with *Insensitive*, proving that Loree is not a one-hit wonder. Billy Cowsill, *I'm Movin' On*: anything in the voice of Billy Cowsill is a treat. That it's a Hank Snow tune is icing. Wendy McNeill, *Fall Girl*: simplicity and depth are equal partners in the music of Wendy McNeill. You can hear the vision of the artist in her compositions. Gary Koliger, *Smile*: an instrumental version of the classic by one of the most unheralded guitarists this country has ever produced.

Overall, a terrific mix that also includes k.d.lang, Jane Hawley, Karla Anderson, David Wilke with Gay Delorme, Diamond Joe White and others.

—By Chris Martin

Joel Mabus

The Banjo Monologues Fossil

Joel Mabus introduces this CD with an accompanied monologue about the banjo "I don't know if the world needs another banjo record" he says "but I do" and then he goes on to say "There are a dozen different ways to tune a banjo and all of them are wrong". What follows is an amazing mixture of songs, tunes and stories about the banjo and Joel Mabus's experience as teacher, banjo player and appreciator of the instrument and the music. Mabus reaches with superb taste into old time music to pick the tunes for this recording. He is such a fine interpreter of this music that some of the old hillbilly standards, which I first heard and learned during the '60's folk scare, and which over the years I'd come to regard as passé, achieve new life in the hands of this man. The playing and singing are magnificent and the story telling informative and fun. If you love banjo music this is a disc for you.

—By Mitch Podolak



Cori Brewster

Large Bird Leaving BRE

It's been several years since Cori Brewster last released a disc. Parenthood will gobble up time quickly like that. Those in that phase of life generally return with a new-found appreciation for music and what it can mean. Brewster has a sweet voice of positivity that lends itself well to the self-penned tracks of life, love, time and discovery. Once dabbling in the Nashville country realm, she has resurrected with a style less confining that allows her to slip in and out of genres as they suit her mood.

Musically, the recording is solid to the core with some very nice inflections that please the ear and never succumb to excess.

Brewster professes in the liner notes to be heading out on the road to discover corners of Canada she has yet to experience. When you live in Canmore, AB, though, leaving can be a hard thing to do.

—By Chris Martin

Greg Hobbs

Thunder and Dust Puddletief Music

I would grab-bag this album into alt-country folk, understated yet insightful, wry, cynical, humorous and candid observations on love, broken hearts, cinnamon in coffee and awkward wedding receptions.

While Hobbs has a restrained approach to singing, his tunes are by no means toothless and I pity and applaud his past partners for providing such great material on love gone wrong, love gone right and love plain gone to dust.

His song writing caught my ear with the

Sunshine and Roses where he lucidly explains, *I know the colour blue when I hear it, It's Emmylou ringing in my ears...I've read about love that lasts forever, I've even felt it brush my shoulder in the hall.* This album is full of such heart-hammered wisdom, which is occasionally tempered with some humorous and candid takes on the less enjoyable chores in life. Take, for example, attending an ex-love's wedding in *Secrets of the Bride: I showed up a little drunk, didn't know how else I could pull through, I still got a thing for you.*

This is a beautifully sounding record with multi-instrumentalist Christine Bouger and Darcy Yates on double base completing the trio and creating a very earthy, yet at times, ethereal take on Hobb's alt-country folk compositions.

Thunder and Dust simmers more than it boils, which is just fine by me as often the most important words in life are heard in whispers rather than shouts. And Hobbs takes the time to make sure that what is being said is worth listening to.

—By Sam Silver

Eliza Gilkyson

Your Town Tonight Red House Records

Eliza Gilkyson has hit her stride in Canada, playing most major festivals and cities in the past few years. As the daughter of songwriter Terry Gilkyson, she has been around music forever. *Your Town Tonight* is a celebration of her life in music. And she shines on this live recording, her raspy, world-weary voice echoing the smoky clubs she cut her musical teeth in.

Gilkyson's songs are strong, and are



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Recordings

flavoured by a sympathetic band, which includes her son, Cisco Ryder, on drums. Essentially a very good best-of recording it should serve as a great introduction to the wonderful musical world of Eliza Gilkyson. – by les siemieniuk

Peatbog Faeries

What Men Deserve to Lose
Peatbog Records

For those of you unfamiliar with the Peatbog Faeries, it might be best to describe their music as fitting somewhere between Shooogenifty and the Afro-Celts.

Their membership has changed over the years, but they are still based on the Isle of Skye off the west coast of Scotland, where they write and record their music. A new keyboard player, Graeme Stafford, has added to their contemporary danceability and the now-established brass section lifts the tunes to dizzying heights. Then there's crunching guitars, bagpipes, flutes and fiddles, all powered along by a truly rocking rhythm section.

If you are a newbie, then a good place to start is *The Invergarry Blues*, which sets off at a smoking pace that never falters – it will have you swirling around your kitchen in no time. Joyous, uplifting music, which proves just how good mixing up-to-date sounds with a traditional feel can be.

– By Tim Readman

Anders Och Patrik

På Väg

Nordic Tradition

Jeanette Eriksson

Låtar På Skånska

Nordic Tradition

Maria Røjås

Silverringar Små Och Stora

Nordic Tradition

Anna Rynefors

& Erik Ask-Upmark

Dråm

Nordic Tradition

Svanevit

Svanevit

Nordic Tradition

Nordic Tradition is a youthful Swedish label specializing in (you guessed it!) Nordic roots music. Unlike Northside, the most prominent North American distributor of Scandinavian sounds, Nordic Tradition really does focus on traditional music, particularly that of Sweden.

The offerings run the gamut from the bright and lively solo debut of fiddler Jeanette

Eriksson to the acoustic quartet Svanevit (Garmarna-unplugged, anyone?). Anders och Patrik are a fiddle and mandola duo, riveting in their minimalist heaviness. Rynefors and Ask-Upmark, who now go as Dråm, are one half of Svanevit and there are echoes of that group's medieval sound in that of the duo, self-described as Swedish drone music.

About the only disc that doesn't sit well with me is that of Maria Røjås (former tutor of the aforementioned Garmarna's Emma Hårdelin), whose mainly a cappella singing I found wearying over the course of 24 tracks. But minor quibbles aside, this is all top-notch stuff worth seeking out.

– By Richard Thornley

Son de la Frontera

Cal

World Village

A burst of palmas, violently rhythmic clapping, opens the disc, telegraphing the intensity and virtuosity to come. The outpouring of brilliance on this album at times is almost overwhelming.

After the opening flak attack, the ringing tonality of the instruments grabs your attention. The unique sound of the group Son de la Frontera results from playing traditional (and not so) music on the Cuban tres – a small-bodied guitar with three pairs of strings, familiar to us from Buena Vista's guajiro songs, but here, underlining the boldness of the music with the tres's edgy tone.

The result of this mixture of flamenco guitar and tres is riveting. Son de la Frontera handles flamenco's technical demands with prowess, and add their own exploratory innovations. Jazz improvs or Spanish folk melodies connect more familiar flamenco

patterns. Moods swing from introspective to dyamic to melancholic – never succumbing to the emotional monochromism which sometimes typifies flamenco.

This is Son de la Frontera's second outing, and apparently the group is enjoying one another's company, artistic and otherwise. Their vibrancy reverberates throughout this explosive CD.

– By Lark Clark

The Undesirables

Dog House Dreams

Independent

The opening track, *This Town*, from the Toronto based duo The Undesirables, has a chorus line that confesses to a visitor: *this town is something that the wind collected/ along the chain-linked fences/ this town is something that the sun neglected/ there's always rain expected.* And we are now drawn into the lyrical and beguiling worlds of lyricist and lead singer Corin Rayond. Sean Cotton completes this duo with strong backing vocals and tasteful simple to intricate guitar work while the co-production of Toronto luminary David Baxtor has reigned in a talented ensemble of side musicians to keep it all very real.

There's a live off the studio floor '70's soulful feel to this recording which conveys the sense that you are in the company of friends whose songs become stories that transform into images and textures.

Whether the places, events and characters that inhabit *Dog House Dreams* be real, imagined, past, present or future, you cannot escape the true feeling that you've been seduced into some novelistic turned graphic comic-book world that swings gracefully between the spheres of Steinbeck, Waits,



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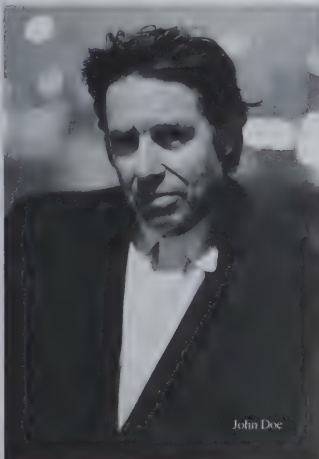
Corin's eye for the naïve joys of life in the summery tale of youth in *Credit River* has the enchanted observation that "jumping off the bridge, that's what we thought it was for" realistically take a more sombre turn with the keen-eye alliteration, *I've got the suspicion that there'd be more trout fishing if another subdivision wasn't underway*.

This is just one of too-numerous-to-mention examples of Corin'ss entertaining and insightful lyrical bent that is bound by Cotton's tight backing vocals and guitar work to create the buckram cloth-bound book of tales in *Dog House Dreams*.

— By Sam Silver

Rolf Cahn & Eric Von Schmidt Rolf Cahn & Eric Von Schmidt Smithsonian Folkways

Originally released in 1961, this album inspired a significant number of up and coming folk artists including Bob Dylan. Primarily the pre-songwriting music of Eric Von Schmidt, this collection of songs has lost none of its vitality over the years. When I reached into the Penguin Eggs envelope and this album appeared I was momentarily struck by a wave of sentimentality but upon listening to it, that maudlin emotion was replaced by awe at the musical quality of these musicians and their approach to the songs. I had forgotten how good an album this was. It includes an astounding recording of *Grizzly Bear* and my favorite recording of *Wasn't That A Mighty Storm*. Scholars and ethnomusicologists may want to study this album and write papers about its signifi-



John Doe

cance. For me, though, Von Schmidt rocks and I don't worry about anything else when the music is this good.

— By Mitch Podolak

Jon Rauhouse

Jon Rauhouse's Steel Guitar Heart Attack

featuring Tommy Connell
Bloodshot Records

Mr. Orchid Fingers, Jon Rauhouse, with his fourth solo release, *Jon Rauhouse's Steel Guitar Heart Attack*, is a musical hodge-podge of Hawaiian, country swing, big band jazz and bluegrass steel guitar *tour de force*.

Mostly instrumentals, Rauhouse gets vocal assistance from friends like Neko Case with her wistful adaptation of *East of the Sun (and West of the Moon)*, Sally Timms's amazingly sultry vocalization of *I'll Be Seeing You*, Rachel Flotard's impeccable-sounding *Harbour Lights* and Kelly Hogan's astounding version of Marty Robbins's gun-fighter ballad *Big Iron*. *Steel Guitar Heart Attack* is all about a sense of cool.

This album illustrates Rauhouse's dazzling guitar finesse, but in a manner that does not overpower this 18-track cardiac spectacle.

— By Philip Harries

John Doe

A Year In The Wilderness Yep Roc Records

It is no longer amazing to note how many post punk rockers have settled firmly into the folk-pop-songwriter mould. John Doe was half of the creative team in a band simply called X. The truth would later be told as he and two of his X cohorts would form a band called The Knitters with Dave Alvin on guitar. X were punk, The Knitters were one of the precursors to the alt-country phenomenon and Doe was always foremost a songwriter. The genre was never the focus, but the song was.

It took John Doe a few quick side trips through bands and some time spent as an actor to find his own persona in 1990 with a solo disc that was ultimately a country album. Seventeen years later, while still in and out of X, John Doe offers his seventh disc, *A Year In The Wilderness*. His eclectic strain of folk-rock is exemplified in the list of musicians and guests: Dave Alvin, Greg Leisz, Kathleen Edwards, Aimee Mann, and Jill Sobule, among others. Moody, touching, loud, fast, twangy, melodic, Doe feels it all but as ever, the focus is the song. For the uninitiated, any cross-section of the musical life of John Doe is the exploration.

— By Chris Martin



Kiran Ahluwalia

Kiran Ahluwalia

Wanderlust

Times Square Records

Wanderlust is Kiran Ahluwalia's fourth release, and on this album her voice sounds as if it's finally found its home. Technique and repertoire meet, expressing a complex range of lyrics and emotions with flexibility and warmth. Ahluwalia brings Punjabi folk tunes to life with sprightly rhythms and enthusiastic instrumentation, giving them a universal appeal, but her more significant repertoire is ghazal — sung poetry requiring the singer to improvise on the lyrics. Kiran seeks out contemporary poets to create new works, which she sets to music. With full translations in the liner notes, we can appreciate the language of longing: *The lines on my forehead seem to predict that we are not destined to be together*, or humorous commentary on religious dogma: *If you must say something, then tell me about yourself. Don't tell me this robe-and-turban story that is someone else's*.

There is an astonishing communication between her and guitarist/arranger/producer — and husband — Rez Abbasi. Rez is a jazz guitarist with his own touring band (Kiran sings with his group as well.) Kiran describes how living together, they hear each other's experiments with melody (hers) or chords (his), and how their music develops together in the process. Some of those delicate, unexpected turns are truly breathtaking, a living embodiment of the improvised love lyrics in the music.

A specially beautiful touch on this album brings Portuguese fado guitarist Jose Manuel Neto into the mix for three songs recorded in Lisbon when Rez's band performed there. The sound of the Portuguese guitar combined with Rez's unique style is memorable. Hopefully this collaboration can be extended on further recordings. Altogether, a delightful album with a variety of pleasures.

— By Lark Clark

Grada

Cloudy Day Navigation

Compass

This is a very solid recording from a young Irish folk band that distinguishes itself with some interesting and unconventional arrangements. Vocalist Nicola Joyce is at times eerily evocative of Natalie Merchant, and pleasingly so. The repertoire is a balanced mixture of Grada composed-instrumentals, traditional pieces and interpretations of well-chosen songs by Suzanne Vega and Susan McKeown.

With a U.S. label deal and Nashville production, Grada are on a parallel track to The Duhks and would likely find enthusiasts in each other's camps. That having been said,

the matchup I'd most enjoy seeing is a Celtic smackdown between Grada and The McDades or, perhaps more congenially, a nice, long Bushmills-fuelled session involving transatlantic musical cousins.

— By Gallagher Parkinson

Notre Dame de Grass

New Canada Road

Independent

It's difficult not to listen to a band with the best monicker in the Canadian bluegrass business, being named after the venerable Montreal neighbourhood, Notre Dame de Grace. This 14-song disc starts where bluegrass bands fear to tread, into Canadian nationalism. The title song, which laments the selling out of our country to the Americans, could have been written by the Council of Canadians, *but at least the toilet paper's cheap.*

The remainder attacks the more traditional bluegrass themes of loneliness, heartbreak, family and headin' into Nashville outta gas, outta booze and *baby you're outta luck.* And of course, a couple of gospel tunes are thrown into the mix.

Eight tunes are originals, with additions by the likes of David Francey, and Dave Clarke and Lucinda Chodan. With tight vocal harmonies and hot instrumental picking propelled by the acrobatic playing of banjoist Guy Donis, NDG should soon become a household name far from La Belle Province.

— By Mike Sadava

John Monro

Plying My Trade

Greentax

If ever the talk turned to the best and most consummate sideman, I always had a hard time deciding between Martin Simpson when he was with June Tabor, Garnet Rogers when he accompanied brother Stan, and Eric Bogle's sidekick of 30-plus years, John Munro.

Both Garnet and Martin have long since gone on to stellar careers of their own, while John, a humble and self-effacing man, has been content to go on in the trenches, making the songs of his longtime friend and co-worker shine, performance after performance, all over the world. Oh, he's always written and performed his own songs — but always with his own band Colcannon, where he remains aside-



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Recordings

man, even when they are doing his material.

So it was actually quite a shock that the Greentree people were able to put together this collection of Munro originals along with a lovely adaptation of the traditional *Wild Mountain Thyme*.

And a lovely, lovely piece of work it is, this first solo recording by Mr. Munro. The guitar playing is exceptional and his vocals belie the fact he spends most of his time as a harmony singer.

Scottish by birth but Australian by choice, John weaves stories about his homeland and his home with skill and emotion, and even throws in a moving song based in Canada, *The Ballad of Charles Devonport*.

No surprises in style here; he hasn't been held back all these years and finally exploded in a cacophony of screaming electric guitars. Just the high quality and gentle songwriting and playing you'd expect from someone who played Eric Bogle songs for more than 30 years.

John, you should have done this years ago. *Plying My Trade* is a wonderful debut for someone who's been on stage all his life making other people's music sound better.

— by les siemieniuk

Paul Brock & Enda Scahill Humdinger

Compass Records

This new CD from Paul Brock (melodeon) and Enda Scahill (banjo) is inspired by Irish music that was popular in North America in the early 1900s.



It is also the first-ever recording entirely made up of banjo and melodeon music. It has already garnered several awards for traditional and instrumental Irish music on both sides of the pond. The music has a verve and an energy to it that sets it apart. Shut your eyes and you can be transported to one of the Irish dance halls that sprang up in North America back in the day. As the polkas, reels, hornpipes, flings, jigs and slip jigs tumble out of the speakers you'll soon have the urge to get off your arse and shake it. And that's a good thing.

— By Tim Readman

Sultans Of String Luna

Independent

This Canadian trio calls their music "atomic world jazz flamenco," which I guess is as good a name for it as anything. With Chris McKool on violin, Kevin Laliberté on nylon string guitar, and Drew Birston on bass, they tap into that gypsy/jazz/flamenco/world music niche, previously occupied by artists like Willie & Lobo, though the bass gives it more swing. Numerous guests — a veritable who's who of the Canadian world music scene — round out Luna. An extremely listenable disc with nothing in the way of a downside. Just lovely.

— By Barry Hammond

Tim Williams Songster Musicianer, Music Physicianer,

Festival Distribution

Anybody who says blues is predictable should take a listen to Tim Williams's latest effort. I've met lots of folks who are down on the blues because of its general 12-bar structure. But Williams takes us on a tour of the idiom that shows the variation, and he's equally adept at all the varieties of the blues, whether he's playing a finger-pickin' rag with tempo changes (*The Beaver Smith Rag*) or rockin' slide guitar on *Shake 'Em on Down*.

On regular, steel or electric guitar or mandolin, or in whatever open tuning he is exploring, Williams shows there are a lot of places the blues can go, and he does them all with an equally adept touch. It's no wonder that Guy Davis has recorded with him, or Eric Bibb has invited him to do tracks on his latest disc.

And he shows that blues lyrics don't have to be clichés. Try to avoid a lump in your throat when you listen to *It's Enough To Be Remembered*, where he hopes a song or two



remains when he's sung his refrain.

— By Mike Sadava

Kate and Hollis Sugar Babe

Independent

The husband-and-wife team of Kate and Hollis Morgan have produced a low-key winner. This Ottawa-area duo met when Kate needed a Dobro player. She got herself a husband and a someone to make beautiful music with, literally.

There's a strong Appalachian influence here, but that's just the start. They take journeys into swing, modern folk and even newgrass, and I'll eat the liner notes if Hollis didn't listen to a lot of Lightfoot at some point in his life.

Songs like *Jennie Wore White* show a heart-felt poignancy, while *Skinny Legs* is pure old-time silliness.

Their voices blend well, the picking is solid and augmented by the addition of mandolin ace Emory Lester, bass player Ken Kanwisher and fiddle player Sarah Hill.

A comparison to Robin and Linda Williams would not be too far off the mark.

— By Mike Sadava

Hans Theessink Slow Train

Blue Groove

Hans Theessink knows more about Mississippi Delta blues than most, which is surprising, given that he hails from Holland. At the same time, his prolific recording career has taken him far afield and his fixation for

American blues has recently been blended with a love of African music, as is evident here. Some 18 albums later, Theessink looks onto the popular blues imagery of a train and carries us across his personal musical landscape, merging the sounds of Ry Cooder to Paul Simon's *Graceland*, jumping from simple blues to full-blown African-hued arrangements that have more in common with world music than anything that began in the Delta. Theessink's rich baritone blends with three African back-up vocalists to create a powerfully hypnotic weave across twelve original tracks that blend traditional sounds to something entirely unique-sounding. *Thula Mama—Oh Mother Don't You Weep, Cry Cry Cry* and *Old Man Trouble* merge blues to African choruses while *Leaving At Daybreak* is a drop-dead beautiful song that sticks to the basics (with exceptional piano from Roland Guggenbichler). As a straight blues record, this disc goes off the tracks, somewhat, but there's no denying the power of Theessink's world vision for his blues and the power of these many influences when they come together like they do here.

—By Eric Thom

Tcheka Nu Monda

Times Square Records

As a child on the island of Santiago, Cape Verde, Tcheka (a.k.a. Manuel Lopes Andrade) would accompany his father, a violinist in demand at village celebrations, weddings and baptisms. Receiving a blow from the bow when his guitar playing failed to live up to standard, the boy developed into an accomplished player.

The story of the rhythms of Santiago Island astonish with their tales of repression and invention. Typically, the Portuguese had outlawed the drum and the ban was re-enforced by the Church. It was the women who found a way to preserve the traditional "bataque". Retiring to the fields, sitting in a circle, the women created an "instrument" so thoroughly disguised as to slip past official notice. Stacking rags and pieces of cloth into a small, tight pile, the women beat the fabric, creating resonances of varied pitches. In this way, African rhythms were preserved in this remote place.

Tcheka is expanding Cape Verdean music, bringing these ancient rhythms to his guitar playing, as well as some Western techniques

of bending notes and occasional brushes of blues. Most prominent is the sense of storytelling conveyed by his singing, which, although performed in Creole, creates dramatic tension that inspires all the details your imagination can fill in.

By turns spooky, percussive, or cheerful, Tcheka's music draws you in, and it quickly feels familiar—a good new friend.

—By Lark Clark

Th' Legendary Shack Shakers Swampblood

Yep Roc Records

Th' Legendary Shack Shakers really know how to stir things up. They started out as a Nashville rockabilly band but with their fourth album, *Swampblood*, offer a mixture of punk, polka, delta blues, hillbilly and other traditional Southern music genres. It's a high energy and explosive listen. Lead singer and harmonica player Col. J.D. Wilkes is famous for his off-the-wall stage antics and takes cow-punk to new heights.

Swampblood is the last chapter in the Shakers' *Tentshow Trilogy*—an anthology of Wilkes's fascination with the evangelical tent

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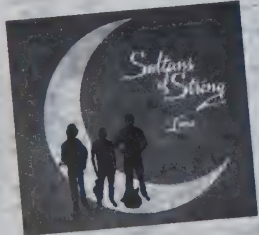
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Recordings

shows of Dixie – a swampy southern roots experience that will stir the blood of many and for others a raucous “amen”.

– By Philip Harries

Various Artists

Folk & Roots Music From Denmark 2007

Danish Folk Council

If you’ve ever wondered about the Canada Council, consider this: the Danish Folk Council promotes the nation’s folk and roots scene by assembling a sampler every year, representing great-sounding bands in a broad range of genres – traditional, singer-songwriter, Danish Celtic, klezmer, fiddle dance music, and something called “modern renaissance”.

The collection is well packaged, with artist bios and contact information accompanying every track. This they send out far and wide around the globe. How wide? CKUA Radio and Penguin Eggs are automatic recipients, so I can only admire how deep their reach must be. The folk council also administers a spotlight program called “Danish roots” which sponsors three bands for three years – sending out yet another CD ballyhooing these lucky bands.

They also sponsor the annual Danish Folk Music Awards, maintain a folk music website, (www.folkmusic.dk), publish a bi-monthly magazine, and maintain a national registry of working musicians.

Having trouble getting your career started at home? Consider becoming Danish.

– By Lark Clark

Dobet Gnahoré

Na Afriki – Contre-Jour

Cumbancha

Twenty-something Ivorian singer Dobet Gnahoré delivers nicely on the momentum generated by her 2006 BBC World Music Award nomination in the Newcomer of the Year category, and the rave reviews of her live performances as a participant in Putumayo’s Acoustic Africa tour.

Throughout *Na Afriki*, the pairing of Gnahoré’s voice and the acoustic guitar of musical collaborator/life partner Colin Laroche de Féline is deeply sympathetic and arranged with a subtlety that at times triggers favourable comparisons with Rokia Traoré.

Infused with a spirit of genuine creative exploration, *Na Afriki* signals a significant arrival.

– By Gallagher Parkinson

Scott Miller & The Commonwealth

Reconstruction

Sugar Hill Records

Under Steve Earle’s

E-Squared label, Scott Miller front-manned Knoxville roots-rockers the V-Roys, and now with his second release on Sugar Hill. Now with *The Commonwealth*, he has released *Reconstruction*, a live recording from the Down Home in Johnson City, TN, late in 2006. Scott Miller is about power guitar riffs, songs of drinking and gambling. *Reconstruction* is one hell of a lively and explosive testament. Miller and the Commonwealth, with their rootsy, circa John Cougar/Springsteen sounding guitars, power their way through 20 tracks filled with humour and drunken observations. *Reconstruction* captures a good band in a bar at their best, so grab your boots, a hat and a cold beer and enjoy.

– By Philip Harries

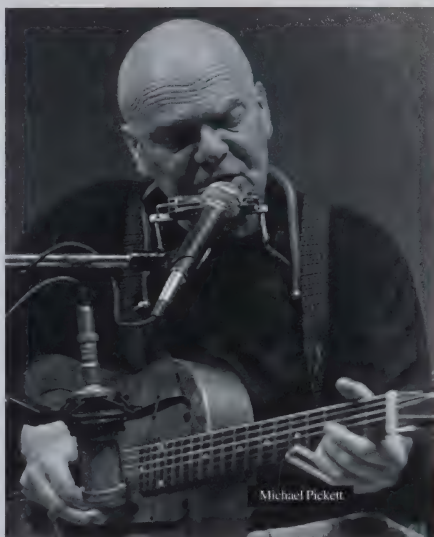
Michael Pickett

Live at Winterfolk

Independent

Long overdue for more respect than he gets, Toronto’s Michael Pickett has been plying the boards since, it seems, the blues began. Armed with his National Steel-bodied duolian and harp, he simply sets up the songs and plays the hell out of them, his voice as expressive as his face is animated in his gutsy, always fervent delivery. His entire mastery of the acoustic blues genre is on parade here and this eight-track – too-short live document – goes a long way reminding people that when he plays, you’d be wise to be there to enjoy his multiple talents. As good as his covers of Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee’s *I Got Fooled* and Robert Johnson’s *Me and The Devil* are, it’s his own compositions that rise to the fore. *Cecil & Spadina* brings all his skills to bear on a song that deserves to become a Toronto hymnal. Don’t judge this book by its cheap-looking cover. It should be a compulsory addition to every Canadian blues library.

– By Eric Thom



Olav Larsen

& The Alabama Rodeo Stars Love’s Come to Town

Hyena Records

Alabama has gone Norwegian! African-Norwegian singer-songwriter Olav Larsen has always been a huge fan of country music and with The Alabama Rodeo Stars put together one helluva fine listen in *Love’s Come to Town*. The strength in this album is its honesty. The songs are from the heart – about broken hearts, lost highways and drunken promises. Olav Larsen & The Alabama Rodeo Stars prove that country music is a world phenomenon and they do it right with this North American debut.

– By Philip Harries

John Dee Holeman & The Waifs Band

John Dee Holeman & The Waifs Band
The Music Maker Relief Foundation

If you’d dreamed up this combination, it wouldn’t have worked. Take a rustic, 78-year old heavy machine operator who’s been playing country blues in rural North Carolina since he was 14 and pair him with Australia’s Waifs – a rootsy folk unit with sufficient authority to garner Bob Dylan’s interest, throw them into a studio and leave the tape rolling. The result is a delightfully laidback affair that transcends both generations, as the awe-struck Waifs supply minimalist, yet appropriate, accompaniment

Recordings

as this largely unknown, supremely talented, Piedmont-trained bluesman nails a groove that will strike a nerve with its audience as it did amongst these players. From Chuck Berry's *Little Queenie* to Lightnin' Hopkins' *Mojo Hand*, Holeman and company present fare that is clearly ageless in its presentation, regardless of its origin, demonstrating the power of like-minded musicians laying back and playing from the heart – all for a good cause. Funds raised benefit the Music Maker Relief Foundation, an organization dedicated to bringing aid to impoverished blues musicians.

– By Eric Thom

Steve Ashley

Time and Tide
Topic

Steve Ashley has released only a handful of albums in the course of his 30-something years on the English music scene. He has quietly kept on recording and performing, and has continued to associate with some of the best players around.

Time and Tide is an interesting collection of original songs with a strong connection to English traditional music. The themes stretch from the evil Blair/Bush axis to his union-organizer grandfather, from nuclear armaments to multiculturalism in today's U.K., from aging gracefully to the decline of the English countryside. Throughout there is a blend of the observational and political with the personal. There's a couple of weak moments, especially the dubious

Latin synth-pop of the Ian Dury-esque *Pub Carpets*, but in spite of that there's much to admire here for fans and newcomers alike.

– By Tim Readman

Maggie Holland

Bones

The Weekend Beatnik

Holland has gradually evolved into a solo artist after playing bass with 1970's English road warriors Hot Vultures. Here is a compilation that includes tracks from previous albums, as well as some unreleased songs. There are originals and covers of Billy Bragg, Bob Dylan and Richard Thompson, among others. Everything starts pretty well with her own song, *A Place Called England*, and then an authoritative reading of Bragg's *Levi Stubbs Tears*. There are some great originals, notably *Perfumes of Arabia*, which was covered by Martin Carthy – as good an anti-war song as you'd wish to hear.

Unfortunately there are some horrible moments, too, like Bruce Cockburn's *Rocket Launcher*, with its nasty drum machine, and *Locks & Bolts & Hinges*, which sounds like the freakin' Human League, but not in a good way. If she'd discarded the dross and kept the best songs this would have been a strong release.

– By Tim Readman

Robbie Fulks

Revenge!

Yep Roc Records

I had the great fortune to hear Robbie Fulks live last year, with 40-odd others at the now-defunct Sidetrack in Edmonton, AB. With such a meagre turn-out, he could have thrown away the set but instead played his heart out – one of the most impressive performances I've ever seen. This two-disc set is the next best thing. You'll be impressed with not only with his great song writing, powerful singing, and awesome guitar playing, but also with his goofy sense of humour – such as belting out a heartfelt version of Cher's *Do You Believe In Life After Love?* in the warm-up. The discs are divided into, *Standing*, with his crack band, and *Sitting*, him performing solo with acoustic guitar. Fulks is a unique artist who deserves far greater recognition.

– By Barry Hammond

North Sea Radio Orchestra

North Sea Radio Orchestra

oof! Records

I first heard last year the NSRO on Stuart Maconie's fabulous *FreakZone* (Sundays on BBC 6 Music). With no domestic release in sight, I broke down and ordered from ama-

zon.co.uk. Been listening incessantly ever since. If you find acoustic chamber folk pop too fay and aery, give this one a pass. However, if you have any affection for the vocal qualities of Kate Bush, the arrangements of Sufjan Stevens or the delicacy of the Penguin Café Orchestra, you need this record. The majority of the pieces are musical settings of British and Irish Romantic poets – Tennyson, Longfellow, Hardy, Yeats. Given the lyrical inspiration, there is an almost unavoidable pastoral quality to the 20-strong NSRO and chorus, which is particularly memorable in their treatment of Longfellow's *Chimes* and Yeats's *He Gives His Beloved Certain Rhymes*. My favourite record so far this year.

– By Gallagher Parkinson

Five Hand Reel

Five Hand Reel

For A' That

Earl O' Moray

BGO Records

Now here's something a little special. Between 1975 and 1978, the electric Five Hand Reel reinvented Scottish traditional music. Thirty-odd years later their star has dimmed little. These three albums offered on two CDs are the unequivocal proof.

While their ranks included England's Barry Lyons (bass) and Belfast-born Tam Hickland (fiddle), the Scottish contingent of Dave Tulloch (drums), Bobby Eaglesham (acoustic guitar) and Dick Gaughan (electric and acoustic guitars) defined much of their repertoire. The wonderful singing of Eaglesham and Gaughan also provided much of their personality. Gaughan's voice here is monumental. His take on Hamish Henderson's anthem *Freedom Come All Ye* and *The Cruel Brother* are definitive.

Five Hand Reel pioneered the use of military snare drumming on songs like the *Haughs O' Cromdale* and *Sheriffmuir*. Furthermore, they paved the way for the likes of Gaelic roots-rockers Run Rig, with their thrilling and inspirational take on *Bratach Bana*. But more than anything, these records rescued Robert Burns's *A Man's A Man For A' That*, *Ae Fond Kiss* and *My Love Is Like A Red Red Rose* from years of abuse at the hands of the tartan-clad cultural terrorists who dominated Scottish television and radio at the time. While Gaughan left in 1978, the band continued for one more album, *A Bunch of Fives*. They were never the same, though, and called it quits shortly thereafter. So hat's off to BGO for releasing what must surely rate as reissue of the year.

– By Roddy Campbell



Robbie Fulks



J.P. Cormier

The Stan Rogers Folk Festival

Canso, Nova Scotia

June 28 - July 1

By Sandy MacDonald

Aside from a shuttle launch or a royal wedding, no event seems so inextricably tied to the weather as the annual Stan Rogers Folk Festival in Canso, NS. The hardy little music gathering at the eastern end of the province has forged ahead for 11 years, sometimes in the wettest, coldest most miserable weather Mother Nature can sling.

But this year was different. Hallelujah.

From the time we pulled into the hilltop campground overlooking the festival site, the sun was blazing in the sky and spirits were soaring. Come to Stanfest and you'd best bring clothes for every weather combo — shorts, sunscreen, polar fleece, tuques and, above all, rubber boots — the official footwear of the Stanfest.

By Friday evening, you could not have conjured up a more beautiful sundown. Wispy horsetail clouds drifted across the blue sky streaked with pink. Still, the Stanfest die-hards wouldn't be fooled — the veterans had their winter wear draped over the backs of the folding canvas chairs for later.

After ten years of hiring and trucking in staging from Montreal, the festival organizers unveiled their permanent new mainstage, an impressive natural wood and blackened steel structure. The new stage is set into the hollow between two bumpy hills — one dotted with camper's tents, the other topped with the Canso graveyard.

Over the course of three nights of main-stage concerts, and dozens of intimate workshop performances, festival-goers got a close-up of some of the best folk performers on the circuit. Stanfest scoured the globe this year, bringing in eclectic Mongolian throat singers Chirgilchin, the Chinese-influenced duo Silk Road, a handful of Texans and Scottish country singer Johnny Reid.

Sadly, folk hero Tommy Makem who was scheduled to play was unable to attend because of health issues.

Since its inception, an inspired initiative led by Troy Greencorn and a community in a declining corner of the country, Stanfest has focused on bringing in songwriters, mostly from the broad folk tradition.

This year's event offered up some of the best crossover writers in the business. Nanci Griffith, a Texan who was part of the dynamic Houston crowd in the '80s that included Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt and a young Steve Earle, made her first trip to Stanfest.

Though looking frail, Griffith performed on Friday night, backed by her guitar player Thomm Jutz and percussionist Patrick MacInerney. She shared a story of playing the Kerrville Festival in Texas in early June 1983, the same night Stan Rogers performed his last show there before climbing on that fated flight home to Canada.

She favoured the crowd with choice tunes from her impressive songbook, including the gorgeous *From A Distance*, a song originally rejected by her American label but became

her breakthrough hit when released in Europe and the U.K.

The Canso fans, by now wrapped in fleece and sleeping bags, sang along to *Hard Life Where Ever You Go*, and *Listen to the Radio*: "This song is the reason I have a pool," she laughed onstage.

Festival favourite J.P. Cormier blazed through a couple of instrumental tunes, including his now-signature *The Mathematician*, a guitar piece that deftly dissolves into the Cape Breton fiddle standard *Sleepy Maggie*. The crowd loved it, as it blasted a jolt of heat into the rapidly chilling air.

Cormier quickly claimed credit for the nice weather.

"I brought the good weather 'cause I was tired of watching you guys swim around out there."

Cormier previewed tracks from an upcoming album, including the powerful ballad *Great Harbour Deep*, a poignant tale of a Newfoundland fishing community breathing its last gasp in the face of a dying fishing industry.

John Gorka, who played the very first Stanfest back in 1997, brought his laid back folk charm to the new Canso stage, and offered up a lovely version of *The Lock Keeper*, one of Rogers's lesser-known tunes.

It was a perfect night, as the full moon hung silvery just beyond the hills that separate the once-thriving fishing community from the boundless North Atlantic.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny, as the bleary-eyed stumbled about in the morning light — many in shorts and rubber boots. The compactness of the campground (and the fact there's practically nowhere else to stay in and around Canso), makes for a lively lateness in the campsite. Badly tuned acoustic guitars and Keith's-fuelled singing rang out till the roosters were stirring.

The cosy workshops began about noon, bringing together four or five artists grouped loosely into a theme set. The day started with a fine clear-the-cobwebs set from the Quebe Sisters, a Fort Worth, TX, trio of teenaged country fiddlers who also sang tight high harmony. Backed by a swinging guitar and upright bass, the Quebes won over the crowd with their infectious music.

Nashville hit-writer Gretchen Peters brought her polished songwriting under the billowing blue-and-white tents for a session called *Rural Roots*. She shared the stage with Jason Wilber (frequent sideman for John Prine, Greg Brown and Iris Dement) and East coasters Audra Rawlins and J.D. Clark.

Better known as a solid-gold songwriter, Peters is a lovely singer, shining on her poignant *Circus Girl*. "Everyone thinks that

Live

one's about the circus," offered Peters. "But it's really about the music business." She should know, living the crazy high-wire act in Music City.

Wilber was a surprise find for the crowd. The Indiana singer and songwriter obviously picked up some of Prine's storytelling skills, beautifully setting up his stress-busting *Lazy Afternoon*.

Seems Wilber was touring the east coast a couple years back with Prine when Jimmy Rankin offered to take them on the town in St. John's, NL. They found a table at the venerable Ship Inn, where Ron Hynes was holding court for the night.

Wilber was apparently so taken with Hynes's songwriting and performing chops, he wrote the tribute tune *Watching Picasso* about the experience, and went in search of a show where Hynes was playing. They hooked up in Canso.

Later in the afternoon, Wilber was quietly standing off to the side of the stage when Hynes settled on a folding chair for The Hitmakers workshop. The irony of a "hitmakers" set at a folk festival wasn't lost on the performers.

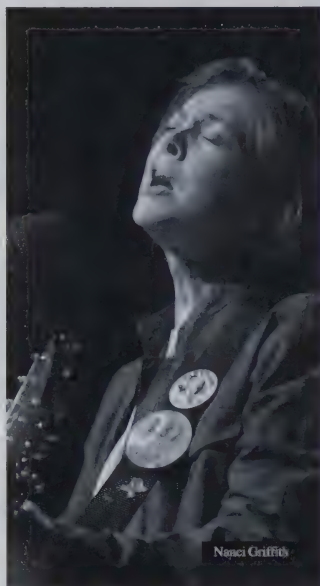
The set drew together Gordie Sampson, Griffith, Hynes and English folk-rock pioneers the Strawbs. Sampson, home for the summer from Nashville, looked less a Grammy-winning songwriter than a relaxed homeboy in a battered ballcap looking for a cold beer.

Sampson kicked off the set: "I'll do this one with some hesitation - I've only sung it once before."

Then he leaned into a raw and beautiful version of *Jesus Take the Wheel*, pulling out the rough edges that Carrie Underwood polished over with her Grammy-winning version. It sprang the appreciative audience into a mid-set standing ovation.

Whatever constitutes a folk hit, Hynes certainly had one with his indestructible *Sonny's Dream*. Lightly ghosting the opening chords on his big Gibson jumbo, Hynes sang the first line and let the audience carry the rest of the song. A couple of hundred fans singing unaided one of the classics of the Canadian folk canon was an inspiring sound.

Wilber thought so, too - his head tipped back, eyes closed and smiling the knowing grin of having heard something truly special.



Nanci Griffith



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Tri-Continental

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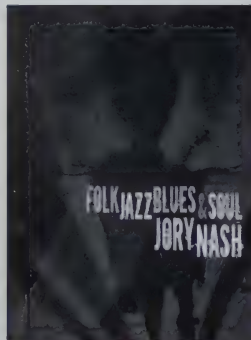
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Methadone

Words and Music

By

Pharis Patenaude

D G

We were wor king in a high-line cen-tre a high-line

D

cen-tre ju-st right. I took the ham-mer and sla-mmed it

G D

back. back in to the load-ing line. It's a

A D G

ham-mer and it's a spike that I-use, that I

D G

drive. I dont drink I don't-really smoke, but I

A G D

take a lit-tle Meth-a-done to help me when I'm broke.

I drive a diesel with three on the tree
One door doesn't open so you get in my way
I took the hammer when I cracked the box
Driving round the corner, too fast on gravel rock

Chorus: It's a hammer and it's a spike,
That I use, that I drive
I don't drink, don't really smoke
But I take a little methadone to help me when I'm broke

Chorus:

Just last year, I lost my kids
I lost my wife, but the kids I miss
Forty five dollars and a month of Sundays
Is what it cost for me to get my mind back when they left

Chorus:

Forty five dollars, a buck fifty each day
Leaving just a couple bits of penance on the plate
Forty five dollars, no it's not too much
For me to feel like I'm back on the road to good enough.

Methadone, by Outlaw Social's Pharis Patenaude, is a powerful piece of writing in the tradition of Bert Jansch's *Needle of Death*. It can be found on Outlaw's wonderful new disc, *Dry Bones*, which can be bought at www.outlawsocial.com. Much thanks to Pharis who very kindly allowed us to reprint *Methadone* here. And much gratitude also goes to John Minter for transcribing the notes and words under very trying circumstances.



Le Legs du Vent

Les trois garçons dans le vent du Vent du Nord viennent de sortir Dans les Airs. Pas tout à fait la tempête des albums précédents, mais il faut lui reconnaître sa chaleur et la maturité qu'il dégage. Yves Bernard estime que c'est une bouffée d'air frais...

Parmi les nouvelles figures de proue de la musique traditionnelle du Québec, Le Vent du Nord est présentement le groupe qui tourne le plus extérieur. Avec une moyenne de plus de cent concerts par année depuis quatre ans, son rythme de croisière dépasse même celui des grandes années de la Bottine souriante. Inutile donc, d'insister sur le fait que Dans les airs, son troisième et nouveau disque, était fort attendu.

Le titre est évocateur de la période que traverse le groupe. «Mais il aurait pu en être autrement», explique en riant Nicolas Boulterice, vieux, chanteur, accordéoniste et pianiste. Nous avions d'abord choisi «Le berger» d'un nom de l'une de nos chansons, mais lorsque nous nous sommes rendu compte que nous devrions expliquer pourquoi «The Burger» à notre public anglophone, nous nous sommes ravisés. Dans les airs, convient nettement mieux puisque notre musique se laisse porter par le vent et l'air. Le caractère léger et aérien représente ce que nous essayons d'être».

«Sur le disque, plusieurs chansons parlent de recherche et de quête. Rien n'est fixé. Les mariages ne sont pas établis et les personnages sont en attente. Plusieurs se font même rejeter», soutient pour sa part Olivier Demers, chanteur, violoneux, podorythmiste et mandoliniste et vieux complice de Nicolas depuis la première heure.

En effet, si le Vent a conservé plusieurs chansons à boire, le thème de l'attente est plus présent que jamais. Un père attend sa fille; un amant, sa future; une femme, son homme. «Ces histoires, on les chante depuis 300 ans», poursuit Nicolas. «Cela doit vouloir dire que cela nous ramène à quelque chose de bien contemporain. La musique traditionnelle possède cette belle qualité de nous ramener à des choses bien concrètes».

Sur le nouvel album, le vent souffle avec toujours autant de persistance, mais plus doucement, comme si le quartette voulait faire respirer, en humant le poul de la terre. Si sur les deux premiers albums, on a toujours retrouvé des airs doux et de moments de nostalgie, le mordant de la vielle à roue de Nicolas Boulterice ressortait nettement plus.

Non pas qu'il y en ait moins, mais le traitement est différent. «J'utilise une nouvelle vielle», explique Nicolas. «Une vielle alto qui est peut-être moins flamboyante et moins perçante, mais plus chaude. Cela me permet de descendre plus bas et de me fondre encore plus dans

le violon, la basse et la guitare. Mais, en règle générale, je joue moins trash qu'auparavant. Il m'arrive également de jouer en dessous du violon, contrairement à ce que je faisais sur les autres disques».

Et Nicolas nous réserve même des textures atmosphériques dans La fille et les dragons, à la fin de l'album. «Traditionnellement, l'instrument est utilisé avec son timbre bien aigu et fort, ce qui facilite la danse. Mais depuis une vingtaine d'années, de nouveaux luthiers ont permis d'autres possibilités, ce qui fait qu'aujourd'hui, on l'entend dans plusieurs contextes sans savoir que c'est ça».

Si, Dans les Airs révèle moins de chien, cela est compensé par une atmosphère plus équilibrée, au sein de laquelle chacun des musiciens trouve sa place d'une autre façon. Et l'arrivée de Réjean Brunet qui a remplacé Benoît Bourque, a transformé l'approche de la formation, mais sans la bouleverser. Provenant de la Volée d'Castors et des Frères Brunet, le contrebassiste, qui joue également l'accordéon diatonique et le piano, est issu du folklore et a longtemps joué pour la danse. Cela transparait. «Il ajoute au spectre des fréquences de notre musique. Lorsqu'il joue de la contrebasse, on n'a pas à forcer et on se sent sur un beau tapis. Mais lorsqu'il sort son accordéon, il apporte des couleurs complètement différentes» estime Nicolas. Avec la Volée, Réjean se contentait d'un rôle de contrebassiste. «Mais il a du talent à revendre sur les trois instruments et en plus, il chante bien. Il est très signé dans sa manière de jouer. C'est certain qu'il a beaucoup teinté le nouvel album», poursuit Olivier.

Comme les disques précédents, Dans les Airs est marqué par des chansons à répondre, des histoires de vieilles et de boisson, des accents jazzés, quelques passages improvisés, du piano aérien, une chanson plus rythmique, de la turlutte, des jeux de pieds alertes et une certaine mélancolie. Mais la principale différence réside dans l'agencement des instruments. Deux pianos swigneront ensemble à la fin d'une pièce en rappelant même Denis Fréchette du temps de la Bottine. Pierre-Luc Dupuis apportera un son croche à l'harmonica chromatique. Michel Bordeleau, l'autre invité spécial, donnera de douces clagues de caisse claire et Olivier, l'ex-violoniste devenu violoneux, se livrera parfois à un son plus terreux qu'avant au violon.

«J'imagine que je suis rendu là», souligne Olo. Durant les dernières années, j'ai participé à plusieurs sessions et cela doit déteindre. À l'avenir, mon son deviendra peut-être encore plus cru.

On prend une vie à maîtriser un instrument. De quoi devient-on satisfait? D'avoir bien joué? D'avoir joué avec intention? D'avoir réussi à bien se mélanger à l'ensemble? En tout cas, je commence à mettre un pied dans la bonne direction». «Dans les sessions, le jeu d'archet est un peu plus violent avec plus de fions», renchérit Nico. Il est certain que les années classiques d'Olo sont plus loin derrière».

Reste Simon Beaudry, chanteur guitariste à la voix pure, frère d'Éric de la Bottine et porteur comme lui d'un riche répertoire familial de Saint-Côme. Il avait remplacé Bernard Simard tout juste avant l'enregistrement des Amants du Saint-Laurent et sa contribution est plus importante sur Dans les Airs. «Il avait joué beaucoup, mais jamais fait de disque. Mine de rien, c'est le guitariste qui est resté le plus longtemps avec nous. Après 300 concerts, il a forcément pris beaucoup de maturité et il chante maintenant plus ouvert», relate Olo.

Tout cela mis ensemble, Dans les Airs, est le disque de la maturité d'un groupe qui n'en manquait déjà pas. Le vent soufflera plus légèrement, mais pour longtemps encore. Nouvelle quête, belle récolte!

Monsieur Versatilité

Les nombreuses des réalisations de Ken Whiteley le hissent déjà au statut de légende. Voilà que le multi-instrumentiste torontois vient de sortir un bon nouvel album, One World Dance. Pat Langston nous valse un compte-rendu d'entrevue. Avec une pétition, on arriverait peut-être à le convaincre.

Ken Whiteley est considéré comme une «encyclopédie musicale» pour sa connaissance approfondie du folk, du blues et du gospel. Il devrait publier ses mémoires. Quelque chose comme «l'histoire jusqu'à maintenant», même si, en dépit de sa marque de commerce, sa barbe et ses cheveux blanchissants, Whiteley n'a que 56 ans.

L'idée que Whiteley écrive un livre n'est pas de moi. C'est Chris White, le directeur artistique du Ottawa Folk Festival où Ken Whiteley a souvent joué, qui a sorti ça récemment. Comme White le fait remarquer: «Quand on y pense, ce gars-là a une si vaste perspective de la musique folk et traditionnelle canadienne».

White ne tari pas d'éloges à l'endroit de cet artiste accompli et infatigable (son tout dernier enregistrement, One World Dance, un excellent album en solo paru chez Borealis), ce compos-



iteur (plus de 300 chansons), collaborateur (les Whiteley Brothers, avec son frère Chris; le tiers du trio Scarlett, Washington et Whiteley), artiste de l'enregistrement (six nominations aux Juno; des participations aux albums de Leon Redbone, Willie P. Bennett et plusieurs autres), producteur émérite (Raffi, Fred Penner), multi-instrumentiste (20 instruments, dont la guitare et la mandoline), et homme du folk tous azimuts (ancien directeur artistique du Mariposa Folk Festival, co-fondateur de Borealis Records). Oh oui, il est aussi le père du bassiste Ben Whiteley, qui joue sur le nouvel album, et l'oncle de l'auteur-compositeur-interprète Jenny Whiteley.

C'est un Whiteley l'air plus jeune que son âge et débordant d'histoires mémorables à raconter que j'ai rejoint par téléphone chez lui à Toronto. Né en Pennsylvanie de parents canadiens, mais élevé à Toronto, il se remémore avec précision ses toutes premières rencontres musicales.

«À cinq ans, nous avons passé l'été avec notre grand-oncle Dave. Il chantait du Stephen Foster en tenant son violoncelle comme une guitare. Chris et moi nous asseyions au grenier pour écouter des 78 tours finis».

Son grand-père paternel dirigea le Northern Ontario's Whiteley Orchestra dans les années 1920 et 1930. Son grand-père maternel de son côté «descendait d'une tradition où tout le monde s'attendait à se faire demander de chanter ou conter une histoire, alors il nous deman-

dait tout le temps de faire notre numéro, même quand on était des petits gars, spécialement lors des rassemblements.»

Comme élève à l'école élémentaire, Whiteley raconte en riant qu'il était le seul garçon qui chantait à voix haute. Vers l'âge de 12 ans, il était tellement versé dans le folk qu'il arrêta d'écouter la bande AM. Si bien qu'en 1965, quand il a entendu Keith Richards jouer de la slide guitar avec les Rolling Stones, il a «réalisé que tout n'était qu'un continuum et que les Stones devaient écouter la même musique que moi».

Quelques années plus tard, Ken et son grand frère Chris ont formé The Original Sloth Band avec Tom Evans, groupe dont on se souviendra pour son éclectisme à la rencontre du folk, du blues et du jazz. Le groupe enregistre trois albums dans les années 1970. Durant la même période, Whiteley ouvre le Shire's Coffee House du quartier North York, à Toronto.

«On a acheté toutes les chaises d'un hôtel de la rue Jarvis et on s'est fait un système d'éclairage avec des cannes de jus», se souvient-il. Ses efforts lui rapportant 35\$ par semaine. Il y a accueilli Brent Titcomb, Stan Rogers, et d'autres grosses pointures.

Un autre projet impliquant plusieurs Whiteley, The Junior Jug Band, a présenté une série de concerts pour enfants dans les années 1980. The Paradise Revue, la formation R&B de Ken, s'est

LE QUARTIER FRANÇAIS

aussi taillé sa niche.

Depuis, et bien, vous avez dû lire la version Reader's Digest du curriculum musicae de Whiteley.

En fait, il rend hommage à sa passion brûlante. C'est le propos exact de *That's When I Need a Song*.

«Les chansons enrichissent nos vies de diverses façons, quand tu te sens bien ou mal, quand tu te révolte ou quand tu festoies, ou quand n'importe quoi», dit-il. Whiteley écrit une pièce, une parmi d'autres avec Amos Garrett à la guitare, et la musicienne torontoise Eve Goldberg. Lui et Goldberg on également fait équipe pour écrire *Lunch Counter Encounter*. «J'ai constamment des idées mélodiques ou harmoniques, mais je n'ai pas toujours quelque chose à écrire», avoue Whiteley.

«La co-écriture est une des manières par lesquelles la musique peut nous aider à nous connecter». Et connecter, c'est fondamental pour Whiteley.

«Tous et chacun de nous sur la planète avons la responsabilité et l'opportunité de nous connecter», dit-il. «J'ai connecté avec des gens avec qui je ne pouvais même pas communiquer par le langage et nous sommes arrivés à jouer de la musique ensemble».

«À un niveau plus profond, je sens dans l'interprétation qu'il est possible d'atteindre un état où je deviens le conducteur d'une énergie qui vient d'en arrière et que nous créons ainsi un grand cercle englobant l'auditoire. C'est essentiellement une quête spirituelle pour moi».

Tous ces propos sur la spiritualité soulèvent la question de la dévotion religieuse de Whiteley. Soucieux de souligner qu'il n'est «pas coincé avec les formes et noms de croyances», il dit qu'il est un Chrétien, faisant remarquer ses albums de gospel. «Mais le Christianisme est en soit un véhicule, comme le sont toutes les religions, pour nous permettre d'expérimenter le divin dans nos vie et entre chacun de nous».

Citant le Nouveau Testament, Whiteley ajoute, «Jésus a dit, 'Aime Dieu et aime ton prochain comme toi-même' et il n'a pas dit, 'Accepte moi comme ton sauveur personnel'. Il a dit, 'Aime ton prochain comme toi-même'. Et qui c'est ton prochain? Il a donné un exemple et ce n'est pas que le gars de ta tribu. C'est quiconque tu rencontrera».

Parlant de tribus, le clan des Whiteley fait de la musique ensemble («Ken et Chris sont le genre de personne autour de qui on pourrait organiser tout un festival», jure White). L'hiver dernier fut



Les Tireux d'Arches

l'occasion du rassemblement de Ken avec sept autres membres de sa famille à Ottawa pour un spectacle, un vibrant événement qu'il fut très compliqué d'organiser, semble-t-il.

Et en plus de ses occupations quotidiennes – rappelons qu'il est en pleine campagne de promotion pour son nouvel album – tout indique qu'il faudra davantage qu'une pétition pour obtenir de Whiteley qu'il travaille sur ce livre. D'un autre côté, dit-il, «J'ai une bonne idée pour un livre de recettes».

Les Tireux d'Arches

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Ce sextet montréalais n'est pas le type de groupe traditionnel québécois qu'on a l'habitude d'entendre, et j'avoue que je ne comprenais pas bien le disque à la première écoute. Fuyant les approches communes à la musique traditionnelle du Québec, leur musique rapporte des influences allant de la chanson française au folk nord-américain, à l'irlandais, à la musique de l'Est et la musique médiévale. Sortant des arrangements très créatifs, les résultats sont des plus théâtraux et les sonorités diversifiées : il y a la chanson à capella «Oh mémé»; l'interlude conté «La fresque du colon»; les percussions guerrières, menaçantes de «Soldat», et bien plus. Le rendu des chansons est puissant : la grosse voix de Denis Massé, peut-être le résultat de quelques cigarettes de trop, est forte et charrie les chansons (principalement) traditionnelles de manière impressionnante. C'est leur troisième album et définitivement l'une des sorties canadiennes de l'année qui se distinguent le mieux.

– Par Richard Thornley

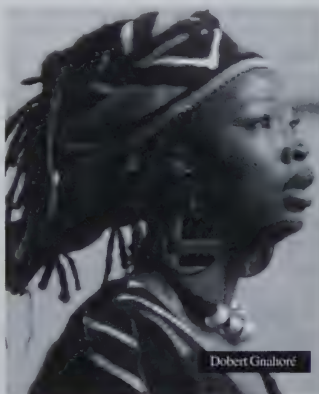
Dobet Gnahoré

Na Afriki

Cumbancha

La jeune chanteuse ivoirienne Dobet Gnahoré jouit de l'engouement créé par sa nomination dans la catégorie Découverte de l'Année à l'édition 2006 du BBC World Music Award et des critiques dithyrambiques qu'elle a reçues pour sa performance lors de la tournée Acoustic Africa de Putumayo. Tout au long de son disque *Na Afriki*, le mariage de la voix de Gnahoré et de la guitare acoustique de son collaborateur musical et partenaire Colin Laroche de Féline est profondément sympathique et subtilement arrangé; qui supporte la comparaison avec Rokia Traoré. Infusion de l'esprit de l'exploration créatrice, *Na Afriki* annonce une arrivée significative.

– Par Gallagher Parkinson



Dobet Gnahoré

Reel Carnaval

trad/Jos Bouchard

A

Violin

5 1.

9 2.

B

13

17 1. 2.

* Voici un air de violon provenant d'un des violoneux les plus influents de la tradition Québécoise. On lui doit d'avoir popularisé non seulement un répertoire inédit mais un style coloré que plusieurs adopteront comme "Le" style québécois.

* Here is a tune from one of the most influential fiddlers in the Québécoise tradition. He is not only responsible for having popularized a new and an original repertoire but also a colourful style that many people refer to as 'the Québécois style.'

C

22

27

33 1. 2. 3.

3

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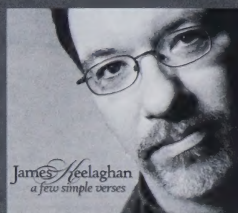
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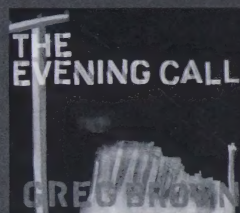
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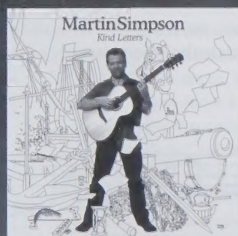
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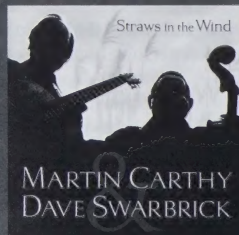
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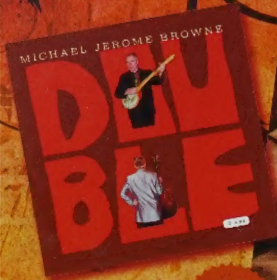
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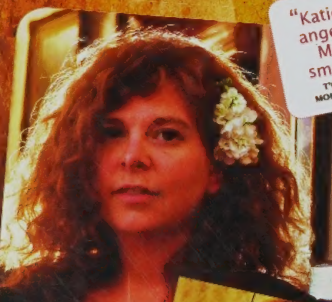
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